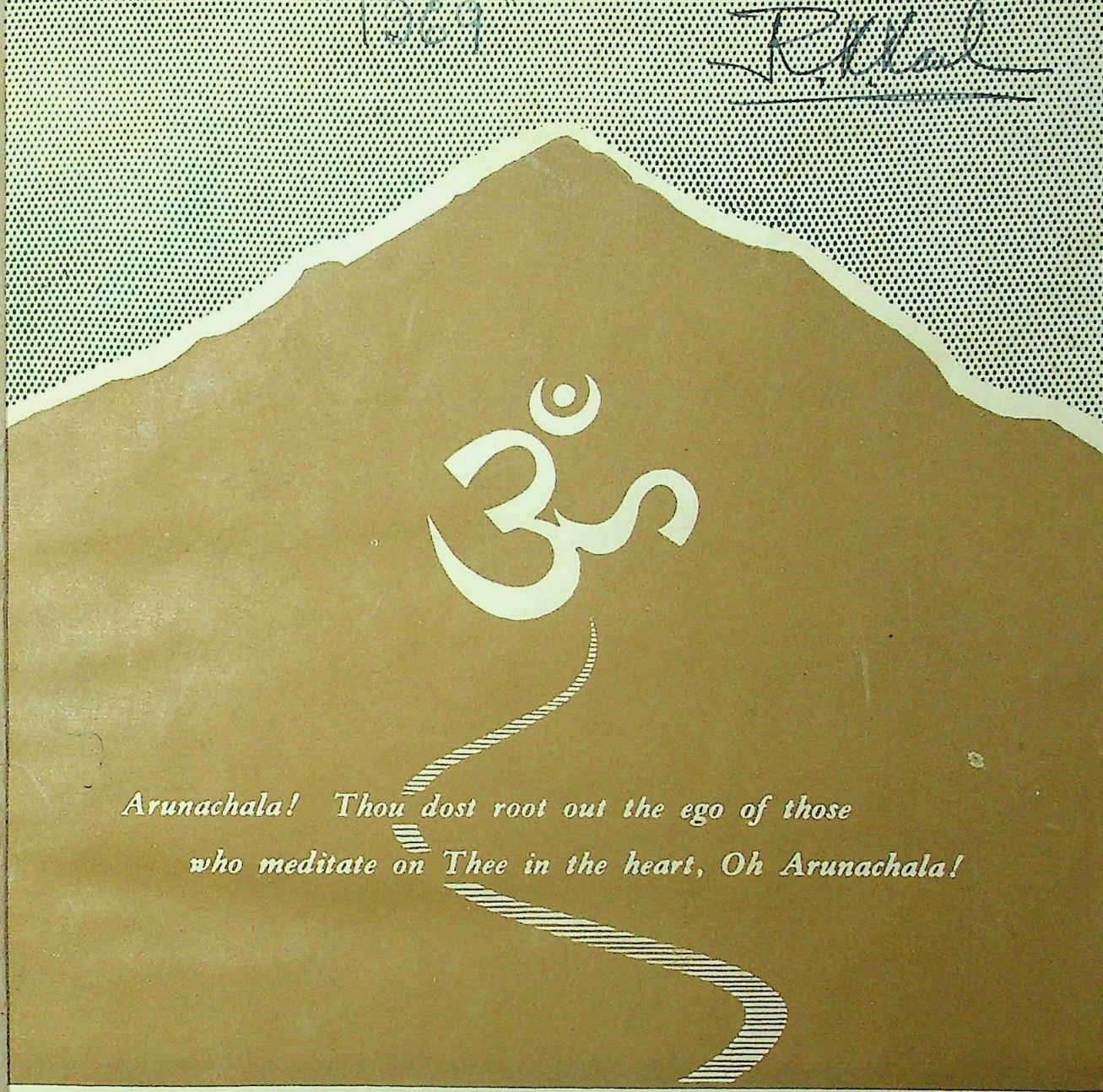
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Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!

The Mountain Path

Vol. VI JANUARY 1969 No. 1

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

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— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 21

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

5. ఎప్పుడు నున్నది యేకాత్మ వస్తువే
యప్పుడా వస్తువు నాదిగురు — చెప్పక
చెప్పి తెలియఁగఁ జేసినా రేయెవరు
చెప్పి తెలుపుదురు చెప్పు.

5. எப்போது முள்ளதவ் வேகாத்ம வஸ்துவே
யப்போதவ் வஸ்துவை யாதிகுரு—செப்பாது
செப்பித் தெரியுமா செய்தன ரேலைவர்
செப்பித் தெரிவிப்பர் செப்பு.

5. *The One Self, the Sole Reality, alone exists eternally. When even the Ancient Teacher, Dakshinamurti, revealed It through speechless eloquence, who else could convey it by speech?*

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

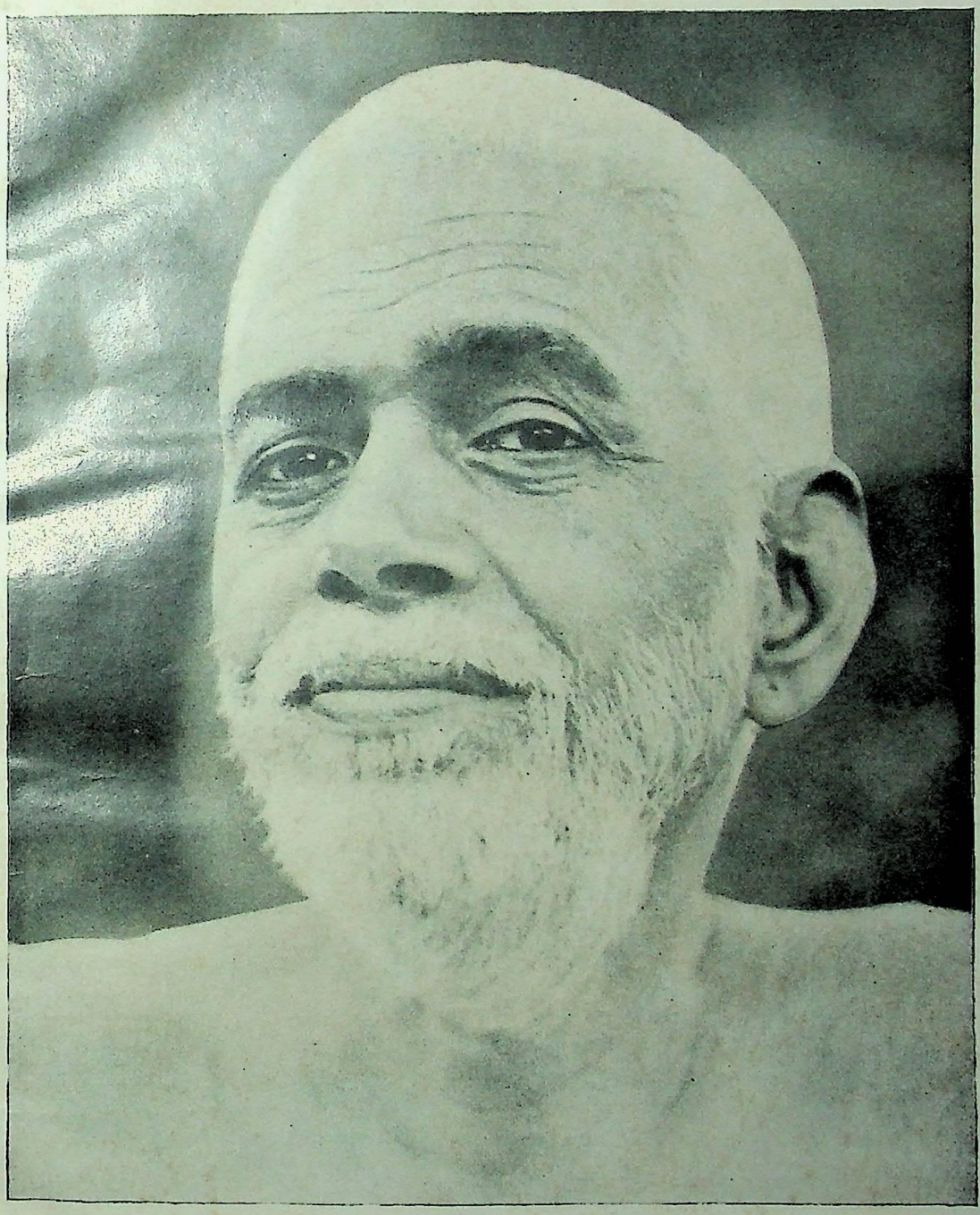
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. VI JANUARY, 1969 No. 1

FRUSTRATION AND FULFILMENT

Editorial

IT is normal to a man to feel his individual selfhood, that is to feel and react as an ego. It is possible to have an intuition of pure Being, not individualized. So long as one believes in the reality of the ego, pure Being will appear as 'other' and be called 'God', because it is indeed other than the ego. When the ego is felt or perceived to be unreal, pure Being will be felt to be real and be called 'Self'. It is not a question of whether there is a God apart from you but whether there is a you apart from God.

The question for each person is whether he regards himself as a real being. If he does he sets up an image of that being. But that image is imaginary, as the term implies, and as such is necessarily unreal and cannot endure. It must break itself against Reality (which is one of the names of God). It may seem to be broken by Reality, but in fact it breaks itself by asserting the imagined reality of itself. Such an assertion of what cannot be against what inevitably is leads only to frustration. Bhagavan said that in adding 'Thy Will be done' to a prayer it is well to remember that it will be done, whether we say so or not. The Divine Will, which is the necessary harmony, will necessarily take place.

Pure Being, equipped with 'my' faculties and tendencies (the faculties and tendencies of each individual 'the'), is shaping them towards perfection. "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," Christ said. However the unreal image of itself which the ego is moulding does not agree with the divine likeness of the perfected self, so it has to be broken down. The more a person's imaginary picture of himself diverges from the true pattern 'made in the likeness of God', the more he will become thwarted and frustrated and tend to become embittered against fate as in the quaint Authorised Version of Christ's saying, "he kicketh against the pricks". On the other hand, the more a person accepts the path of his true nature, the more grace and blessing he finds upon his life. This acceptance does not need to be conscious and doctrinally informed; it may

be a mute humility, submitting unquestioningly to the dim intuition of purity.

The perfect fulfilment of the individual's wishes comes when he has ceased to have any wishes. That is to say when he has ceased to have any self-will to oppose to the Universal Will or Divine Harmony. There have been cases where a saint, even while still on the dualistic level of worshipper and Worshipped, has declared that God has such love for him as to grant him whatever he asks for. But if one studies the life of such a one, one will find that none of the things asked for were egoistic. One may even find that this overwhelming feeling of Divine Benevolence was not inconsistent with poverty, sickness or imprisonment. It simply never occurred to him to plead against such things. Since no opposition is set up any longer to the flow of Universal Being manifesting through 'my' faculties, no opposition has to be broken down and no frustration caused.

The same liberality is proclaimed in the scriptures and by the Enlightened as befalling the non-dualist so soon as he renounces opposition to the flow of Grace. Some devotees were speaking to Bhagavan once about shortage of funds at the Ashram and he said : "If I gave a single thought to the need for money so much would come in that you could not count it." Once during his last illness Sri Viswanathan (introduced in our issue of January 1967) said : "If Bhagavan would give just one thought to getting better the sickness would end", and he replied in a tone of disgust : "Who could have such a thought ?" The meaning was : "Who could have a self-will to oppose to the Divine Will shown in the flow of events ?" Even in the smallest things (and it was only in the smallest things that anything approaching a wish could be discerned) there was this immediate fulfilment. If he took up a book to refer to some passage it would normally open at the very page he needed. He remarked to an attendant on the need for a note-book and K. K. Nambiar (introduced in our issue of July 1966) dreamed that he needed one and brought one next morning. He happened to mention oranges at the Ashram and some one sent a crate of them next day. In general he did not express wishes ; he had none to express.

One who has renounced the ego has thereby escaped frustration. He feels the nullity of the ego and at the same time, whether it is a paradox or not, he feels the Divine Benevolence and the fulfilment to which he has been brought.

Visitor : God is said to be immanent, how do you justify your confining Him to the heart ?

Bhagavan : God is said to reside in the Heart in the same way as you are said to reside in your body. Yet Heart is not a place. Some place must be named as the dwelling of God for those who take their bodies for themselves and who comprehend only relative knowledge. The fact is neither God nor we occupy any space. We are bodiless and spaceless in deep sleep, yet in the waking state we appear to be the opposite. Atman or Paramatman is that from which the body is born, in which it lives and into which it finally resolves.

— From *Guru Ramana.*

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AS A UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

IF comparative religion is a fairly recent subject of study it is because the need for it is recent. For most of known history the world has been divided into a number of separate cultures or civilizations each based on its own religion and knowing practically nothing about each other. As recently as two centuries ago an average Christian scarcely knew that there was a religion called Buddhism and had probably never heard of Taoism. The only two non-Christian religions that he might conceivably come in contact with were Judaeism and Islam, and even of them his knowledge was very little and grossly distorted.[1] If the representatives of a religion taught that theirs was the only true doctrine and the only valid way, they were not really to be blamed, because it was the only truth that they or their followers were likely to come in contact with. The only predictable alternative was materialism or heresy.

To-day the situation has completely changed. The spread of a one-world civilization has come about so rapidly that an average Christian has only to go to the nearest public library to get a score of books about Buddhism.[2] In the former state of affairs it was not necessary to study comparative religion; in the present there is urgent need for inter-religious understanding. If the representatives of each religion continue to claim a monopoly of truth they are no longer justified by lack of contact with other religions but, on the contrary, are wilfully rejecting such contact in order to protect their blindness. Such an attitude, formerly harmless, has now become dangerous, because if each religion is going to decry others and claim a unique position for itself the effect on non-believers will be to make them decide that all religions are equally untrue . . . This is a very real danger. The militant representatives of all three proselytising religions — Buddhism, Christianity and Islam (to give them in chronological and alphabetical order) — must know in their hearts that they will never draw every one into their own camp, but do they realize that they risk alienating people from every camp?

In the present state of the world it is no use telling people that only one religion is valid, because too much knowledge of other religions is available. It is also no use telling them that all religions are the same, because they are so obviously not the same, they differ in so many points of doctrine and ethics. What is needed is to impart understanding of them and show how different structures can be erected on the same substratum of truth or different mountain paths lead to the same peak. That is to say, that it is urgently necessary to impart not merely information but understanding about the various religions. In this domain there is no such thing as 'the facts of the case'. Facts can be very misleading. What is needed is to understand the viewpoint from which each religion starts. It is like a group of white-robed dancers on a stage. If one section of the audience sees them through a screen of blue celophane, another green and another red, most people in each section will really believe that the dancers are

[1] There are cases, as in India and China, where religions co-existed: a Kabir or Nanak could appreciate Sufism, a Dara Shikoh write of the merging of the two seas, a Taoist expound Buddhism, but by and large the religions, with the cultures based on them, remained separate.

[2] In fact he is very likely to have a Buddhist society in his home town and the Buddhist a Christian missionary in his.

the colour they see and that the other section must be perverse to argue otherwise. Some years back a book was published by F. H. Hilliard called 'The Buddha, the Prophet and the Christ'. The author, after discussing which of the three had the best right to be considered a Divine Man, comes down, with much satisfaction, on the side of Christianity. Now this is the kind of comparative religion which, by foisting the author's own misunderstanding on others, is not only unhelpful, but downright harmful. I do not say that the author was arguing unfairly : he was not, he was trying very hard to be fair ; but he was unconsciously biased by the fact that his argument was entirely from the viewpoint of his own religion, like the people seeing the dancers only through a blue or a red screen. What he overlooked is that, of the three religions compared, Christianity is the only one based primarily on the conception of the Divine Man. Islam is based rather on the conception of a revealed scripture, and if a Muslim had written the book its title might have been : "The Gospels, the Sutras and the Quran as revealed scripture" ; and Islam would have won. If a Buddhist had written it, it might have been : the Sermon on the Mount, the Shari'at and the Noble Eightfold Path as a way to Beatitude, and supremacy would have gone to Buddhism. The role of the teacher of comparative religion would be to explain that the three religions mentioned start from different viewpoints and show what those viewpoints are. And that is not an easy thing to do.

This means that although the teaching of comparative religion has become urgently necessary in our age, it may not be at all easy to find people competent to teach it. Mere factual information is obviously not enough. It is the attitude of mind of the teacher that is more important.

With a few honourable exceptions the subject has not had a good record in the past. It began in the 19th century when Europe's intellectuals were expected to be athiest or agnostic, the century of Freud, Darwin and Marx ; and its early exponents, the school of Frazer's 'Golden Bough', were seeking to undermine Christianity and religion in general by showing that the so-called higher religions had grown out of what were then thought to be 'primitive superstitions' (though they were debased remnants of religion). Later comparative religion fell largely into the hands of proselytisers whose aim was to belittle or disprove all religions except their own. It is a shameful fact that some of its chairs, even some of the most eminent, still remain in such hands.

This raises the very important question whether and on what basis professors of comparative religion can be expected to grade the religions. It is a terribly presumptuous thing to do — to set oneself up in judgement over the religions. On the other hand, since they differ in doctrine, can they be accepted as different paths to the same ultimate Truth ? I suggest applying Christ's criterion, that is "By their fruits you shall know them." This applies to religions as well as individuals. If a tree produces mangoes I shall still believe it to be a mango tree however cleverly my neighbour may argue that mango trees grow only in his garden. To put it differently, anything that performs its function is satisfactory. The function of a fountain pen is to hold ink and to write, and one that does so is therefore satisfactory while one that fails to is not, even though it may be of solid gold.

So now we are driven back to the question what is the function of religion. I suggest that it is twofold, horizontal and vertical. Horizontally it is to establish a harmonious way of life for a community, regulating personal relations, social conditions, education, law, etc. Vertically it is to provide pathways to Beatitude. Each facilitates the other ; the harmonious way of life facilitates the quest of Beatitude for those who undertake it, while the perennial flow of Grace through those who attain Beatitude maintains the Divine Spirit in the way of life and counteracts the

natural tendency of all institutions to petrify. Without the vertical modality, the horizontal will rapidly become lifeless and unjust ; but without the horizontal the vertical can still persist. The horizontal modality of religion is almost defunct in all religions to-day. There are few if any communities know of which it could be said that they follow a Christian way of life, or an Islamic, or a Buddhist, or a Hindu. Life in our one-world civilization has been secularized. Education, finance and civil and criminal law have been withdrawn from the custody of religion. To pronounce on the horizontal modality of any religion we would have to consult the historian ; and even in doing that we would have to check his prejudices as well as his facts, because the same pattern of life can be depicted in various lights.

But the vertical modality of religion, the ascent to Beatitude, still remains ; and this brings us back to the subject of comparative religion, because I suggest that the possibility of attaining Beatitude under the guidance of any religion is the proof of its validity. A religion which can produce a St. Francis or a Meister Eckhart is a true religion whether its doctrinal theory seems acceptable to me or not. So is one which can produce a Ramakrishna or a Ramana Maharshi. If you object that it has not made a St. Francis out of you, the reply is that that is your fault ; once it is established that, given suitable material, a religion can produce a St. Francis the blame for its not doing so in any specific case cannot be imputed to the religion.

Suppose a group of people in Bangalore are discussing the possibility of going to Delhi by road or rail or air, the discussion of the practicability of any of these routes ends as soon as some one can be produced who has taken it. What remains is only the explanation of how he did so. Similarly, as soon as it can be shown that some one has attained a beatific state through any religion there ceases to be any question whether it is possible to do so and the task of the professor of comparative religion becomes to explain how it can be done rather than to argue whether it can be done.

There is one qualification to this ; that is that a path to Beatitude may have been valid in some religion but have got overgrown and lost through disuse. Because religions do not progress. In spiritual power they degenerate. This is true always of all religions, though it is also true that so long as there is sufficient spiritual vitality in a religion it is periodically restored by Divine Grace. Sri Krishna told Arjuna that he had taught that same yoga to the ancient royal sages that he was now teaching to him, but it had been lost through long lapse of time. That is what happens. He also proclaimed : "Whenever dharma is eclipsed and adharma prevails I manifest Myself." That also is what happens. Before asserting the possibility of going to Delhi by train it would be necessary not only to produce some one who once went that way but to check whether the track is still usable or has since been washed away by floods. Before asserting the validity of a religion the professor of comparative religion would have to check up that it not only produced great saints centuries ago but still can to-day. If he is to do this successfully and thus bring real benefit to his students he should be a mango-eater in Ramakrishna's use of the term. You will remember that Ramakrishna said that, coming upon a mango-grove a sensible man will not waste his time counting trees and branches and leaves but will pick and eat a mango. People who talk about comparative religion can be classified at large into leaf-counters and mango-eaters ; it is the latter that are needed. Also, to revert to what I said earlier about proselytism, what is needed is some one who can appreciate not only a mango but an apple or a peach as well, not some one who argues that because a mango is sweet an apple must be sour.

So the conclusion is that adequate teaching of comparative religion at the universities is urgently necessary but might not be very easy

to organize. One possibility in a multi-religious country like India might be to split the discipline up among exponents of different religions, each one lecturing on his own religion. But then there is the danger that it might strike the students as being like a bazaar with each shopkeeper crying up his own wares. It would be better if one single mango-eater with an appreciation for apples and peaches also could be found.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

76. The Lord's compassionate grace it is
That impenetrable oblivion blots out
Our countless former births each filled
With griefs we suffered and inflicted.

77. Memory of the tale of troubles
This present birth has brought on us
Embitters our whole life and makes
Forgetfulness a thing to long for.

78. *Shakti* and *vyakti* both are born
Through the wondering mind's conceiving.
But in the Self's Reality
Beyond the mind's bewildering play
They are not, were not and will never be.

79. Ascribing individuality
To realized *muktas*
Is only learned folly.
In the pure sky of Being
Their separateness is but the shadow
Cast by the separateness
Of lookers-on still bound.

80. Since in the hearts of seekers of the Self
Awareness as the sole true Being stands,
And attachment to the body is no more,
We cannot declare
"That One or this One is a peerless seer."
Are seers but bodies and so more than one?

81. Ye who go round in eager search
Of this Great Soul and that Great Soul to look at,
Are not all Great Souls one Great Soul,
The One within yourselves, your own
To reach and know and be?

82. No matter what one's penance or one's powers,
One is not a true seer effort-free
But still remains a seeker
As long as one feels tethered
To a body of one's own.

83. Without Self-knowledge which transcends
All individuality,
Vain, vain are wonder-working powers.
These maddening gifts none seeks
But those who have not known
Identity with Self.

84. The seer consummate, formless, is the sum
Of all the wonder-workers in the world.
His are the many miracles that happen.
He stands as silent witness of them all,
This Dakshinamurti.

SERVICE TO MANKIND AS A BASIC FEATURE OF RELIGION

By
JAGANATH CHATTOPADYAYA

MAN has an innate feeling of a repository of vast power and energy, by whatever name he may call it. The different forms of religion are only different ways of venerating this Almighty Power. Among the Semitic peoples like the Jews and Muslims it is the power aspect, the grandeur of this unique, omnipotent, omniscient Power which is most emphasised. Among the Aryan peoples this Power is seen also as immanent in nature and in man who is a part of nature. It is stated in the Upanishads that in the beginning nothing existed but God, and therefore this whole cosmos with all that it contains is a manifestation or projection of the supreme Power of Paramatma. Buddha taught the inexorable laws of causation, showing the whole of nature to be governed by these laws. Although he never mentioned God in his teaching, yet by Nirvana he indicated the negation of not-God, that is of our illusory ego, and the possibility of merging in an ineffable cosmic state of bliss and consciousness. In all religions we find a common basis of unanimity that links them together or, in the words of Sri Krishna, binds them like jewels on a thread.[1] In all we find the sense of an Omniscient, Omnipotent Power, by whatever name it be known.

However, what I wish to concentrate on particularly in this article is the teaching of service to mankind which stands out as a salient feature in every religion. Let us examine some of the principal religions from this angle.

In the Judaeo-Christian scriptures it is stated that God made man in His own likeness. From this it follows that service to man is equivalent to service to God. Christ made this still more explicit when, speaking of the weakest and most defenceless of his followers, the small children, he said : "inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of these you do it also to me."

In Islam also service to mankind is given a prominent place and is reflected in the warm heart and noble conduct of Hazrat Muhammed himself. It is said in the Quran : "No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. God will not love that man who does not love God's creatures. He is the best beloved of God from whom the greatest good is derived to all mankind." And in another place it says : "Woe to those who pray but are heedless in their prayers, who make a show but refuse help to the needy." Islam constantly enjoins surrender to God and service to mankind. It seeks to knit its followers together in a common brotherhood.

Coming next to Hinduism, we must remember that by that we mean the 'sanatana dharma' or 'eternal religion' based on the Vedas and Upanishads. This teaches that a man is born with accumulated debts which he has to pay off by performing yagnas or sacrifices. These are of five kinds. The first is Brahmayajna by which we pay off our debt to the great Vedic seers or rishis on whom knowledge dawned and to whom we are indebted for our inherited lore. The second is pitriyajna, by which we pay off our debts to our ancestors. The third is devayajna by which debts are paid off to the gods or spirits. The fourth is bhutayajna by which we pay off our debts to all the beings of this

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, VII, 7.

physical universe. The fifth and last, with which we are primarily concerned here, is nriyajna or the human debt by which we pay off our obligations to mankind. It was appreciated that the lives of men are closely interlinked. Our debt to mankind in general can be paid off by ministering to the needs of the poor, the hungry and the distressed. It is incumbent on every house-holder, therefore, to feed at least one such needy person before taking his own meal, if any such approaches him. It is also laid down that at least a tenth of one's income should be spent in charity. It is declared by the Lord that the hospitality which is to be considered a duty is that which is given to one who is not in a position to return it or who deserves it according to the conditions of time and place.[2] This is indeed sattvic or pure-minded charity. We find also in the Vedas the unique example of the great rishi Dadhichi who sacrificed his very life for the good of mankind. Our actions and thoughts should be such as to cause happiness to others. One should remain aloof and cause pain and injury to none. This is indicated in the Gita where Sri Krishna says : " Dear to me is the man who causes no suffering to anybody and who himself is not swayed by pain or pleasure, fear or anger." [3]

The ethics of the Upanishads, from which Vedanta is derived, are sublime and lofty. They teach that the universal Paramatma resides in every individual heart and therefore every individual is basically the same. This is expressed, among other places, in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, where Yajnavalkya says : " Truly, it is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is loved but for the sake of the Self (in him) ; it is not for the sake of the wife that the wife is loved but for the sake of the Self (in her).[4]

In dealing with Buddhism we have to remember that the Lord Buddha was born and brought up in the environment of Hindu tradition and culture. In the words of Rhys Davids : " Buddha was born and brought up, lived and died, as a Hindu. There was not much in the metaphysics and principles of Gautama which cannot be found in one or another of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books."

Seen in this light, Buddhism can be regarded as an offshoot of Hinduism. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar sublimity in the recorded teachings of the Buddha. This can be seen in the following answer given by the Buddha to a disciple who asked him on what he should meditate. " Meditation is of five kinds. In the first place you should broaden the horizons of your mind in such a way as to embrace with love both friend and foe and the followers of all creeds and religions, always thinking that you may be of service to them all. The second is that you should realize in your mind the abysmal depth of misery into which mankind is plunged and therefore direct your thoughts to its mitigation and redress. Your whole life purpose should be the relief of this inexpressible distress of mankind (caused by tanha or clinging to desire). In the third kind of meditation you should associate your mind with the happiness and prosperity of other people. The fourth kind is on the mind's conception of sin and impurities. These are the outcome of weakness and ignorance. The egoistic sensual pleasures from the body are transitory, but the sins and impurities they engender are of a long-standing nature. The fifth kind of meditation is the highest. In this your mind should possess equanimity and poise. It should be in such a state that neither grief nor happiness, poverty nor prosperity may affect it. You should transcend all these pairs of opposites — this duality confined in space and time — and reach that ineffable state of peace and bliss which is indescribable and attained only by Nirvana."

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[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, XVII, 20.
[3] *Bhagavad Gita*, XII, 15.
[4] *Brihad. Up.*, 11, IV, 3-5.

Thus it will be seen that service to mankind forms, as it were, the central pivot on which all the religions of mankind revolve. Whether or not belief in a personal God exists, selfless love for our fellow beings is emphasised in them all. Indeed, it is by this that we attain to our true nature, which is divine. In the words of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, "Action performed unselfishly purifies the mind and helps it to fix itself in meditation." He further states that until we attain Realization by waking out of this illusion of a phenomenal world we must do social service by relieving suffering whenever we come upon it, but without the sense of doership, that is the feeling that it is we who are doing so or who should get the credit for doing so.

Right and Wrong

Q. : If it is a question of doing something one considers wrong, and thereby saving some one else from a great wrong, should one do it or refrain ?

Bhagavan : What is right and wrong ? There is no standard by which to judge something to be right and another to be wrong. Opinions differ according to the nature of the individual and according to the surroundings. They are again ideas and nothing more. Do not worry about them. But get rid of thoughts. If you always remain in the right, then right will prevail in the world.

(The devotee was not satisfied with this answer and asked for further elucidation.)

Sri Bhagavan then pointed out that to see wrong in another is one's own wrong. The discrimination between right and wrong is the origin of the sin. One's own sin is reflected outside and the individual in ignorance superimposes it on another. The best course for one is to reach the state in which such discrimination does not arise. Do you see wrong or right in your sleep ? Did you not exist in sleep ? Be asleep even in the wakeful state, abide as the Self and remain uncontaminated by what goes on around. Moreover, however much you might advise them, your hearers may not rectify themselves. Be in the right yourself and remain silent. Your silence will have more effect than your words or deeds. That is the development of will-power. Then the world becomes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within you.

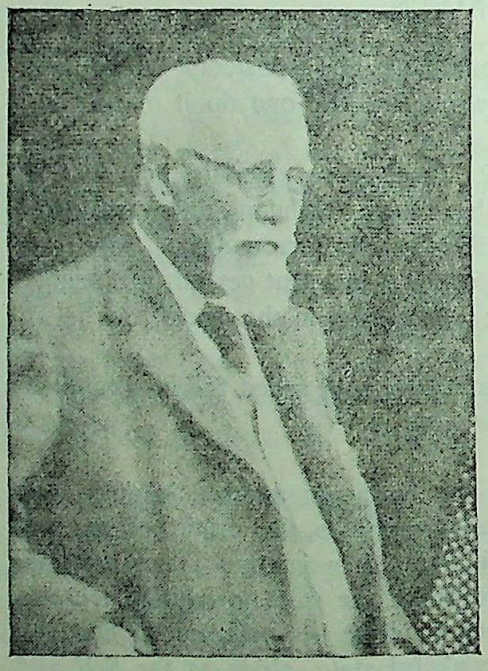
— *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi.*

HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN—

A MODERN MYSTIC OF THE WEST

By
GILBERT HENRY GEDGE

FEW of us are privileged to come into close personal contact with a great spiritual leader, but all who know Henry Thomas Hamblin intimately were so blessed. I first met him after a meeting in London in 1948. I had then been writing regularly for his magazine, the *Science of Thought Review*, eleven years but had never met him in the



Mr. Hamblin

flesh, though I had twice tried to do so. In regular correspondence with him over the years, I had grown to love this man who I know from his writings had faced up to all the problems I was familiar with and had found the spiritual way of dealing with them. As he turned to greet me when I touched his elbow and I looked into his eyes for the first time there was rapport between us immediately. We had little or no opportunity for conversation, however, until an hour or more later when we sat side by side in a taxi—and then words seemed unnecessary. After two or three minutes silence he suddenly turned to me and said: "Isn't it wonderful how everything looks so much brighter when we are spiritually uplifted! Even the drab, dirty bricks seem to take on a living colour"! That was literally true for each of us at that moment. But H.T.H. by no means viewed the world through rose-tinted spectacles. As he tells us in his books and writings, he came through the hard school of business with its emphasis on the practical, and he was very much aware of the evil and suffering in the world. His vision was able to pierce beyond that, however, to the spiritual Reality behind the world of appearance. To him the Presence of God was the only Reality, and after he left the business world his one aim in life was to help as many people as possible to find that Reality and make it the very basis of their lives.

H.T.H. had a very difficult time before he was ready to do such work, however. Born of poor parents and, according to his own account, by no means well-endowed with perseverance or talent, he had great difficulty in his early years. At the age of sixteen he had a remarkable spiritual experience the impact of which, though partly erased by the stresses and follies associated with the process of growing up, never completely left him. It was on that occasion that he realised for the first time his one-ness with Reality — the I AM.

Despite his vision H.T.H. had his period in the wilderness, until the time came when, some seven or eight years after his first

spiritual experience, he had a second. One night, feeling a compulsion to pray, he knelt by his bed and at once became aware of the Divine Presence. It was as though he were cradled and poised in Divine Love, filled with the deep peace of the Eternal and "floating out on to the bosom of an Infinite Ocean of Infinite Bliss; yet, at the same time, His Peace and His Bliss flowed through me like a great river, and I was one with it." [1]

Yet again, however, H.T.H. became enmeshed in the enticements of this world and spent quite a number of years "making money". He worked very hard and indeed was very successful, and was able to leave behind the poverty-stricken existence which had been his previously. But he was not satisfied. He was by nature a pioneer, and could not rest content to enjoy the fruits of his efforts. As soon as an enterprise (and he actually started at least three) began to show signs of becoming established and the work involved began to appear easy and a matter of routine, he lost interest. His restless temperament impelled him to seek a new outlet for his energies.

Ultimately the time came when his very success became to him a form of slavery, and he began to loathe his business. Eventually, after sundry struggles, he severed all connection with it, and thus relinquished the assured income of a wealthy man. Having done so he found himself urged to write, and from then on he poured out a succession of lessons and books which have helped many thousands of people to change their thinking and thus their life. His first book was 'The Message of a Flower' which still delights all who read it. This was followed by 'Within You Is the Power', a book of which over a quarter of a million copies have been issued.

His last, and in my opinion his greatest, book was 'My Search For Truth'. The early part of this book inevitably repeats some of what he wrote in his earlier 'The Story of My Life' but it then goes on to give a clear picture of the philosophy and beliefs that he gradually grew into. His ideas slowly developed over a long period from the time he published 'Within You Is The Power', but the basis remained fundamentally the same; the omnipresence of the all-goodness of God. But, whereas in 'Within You Is The Power' his object was to show people how by proper direction of their thought and faith they could change and control their life and circumstances, his later works were more specifically concerned with teaching people how to find a living consciousness of the Presence of God for Himself alone. He himself at the time of his great success in business had lost all sense of that Presence. As he wrote in 'My Search for Truth': "I was shut off from Nature and from God." God had work for him to do, however, and eventually guided him back to the Divine pattern for his life. The change over was not without suffering and severe struggles. He hung on to his business life as if his whole being and life depended on it — as indeed he thought it did! — but a succession of night experiences literally drove him out of it. In the middle of the night he would wake up feeling he was actually in hell, with all the sorrow, suffering and despair of the damned concentrated in his own soul. For some time he tried to ignore these warnings, but eventually decided to give up business — and then these terrible experiences ceased. Ambition had driven him on a career which was not what God intended for him, but now Infinite Love and Wisdom could use him.

In the meantime he had come in contact with some of the so-called "Mental Science" teaching, but soon found that all his use of denials and affirmations only ended in failure. Eventually, of course, he realised that what he was really seeking was "to know God and experience His peace". That, with the concomitant idea of one-ness with God, became the basis of all his future teaching, in which he continually emphasized that our seeking must ultimately be not through mental effort

[1] *The Story of My Life* published by the Science of Thought Press Ltd., Chichester.

but through acceptance and surrender, "turning the heart to the Lord". For him the omnipresence of God meant inevitably the presence of the Divine Order here and now. "The Kingdom or realm of God is with us now and always".[2]

That Kingdom of God we find not through our mind but through our heart. "In other words, my heart responds to Love, so that I feel God. And thus it is through *feeling* that I know, and not through reasoning. Because God is Love it is necessary that in order to know God we too must become Love, for only God (Love) can know God (Love). It follows, therefore, that we can really know God only through feeling".[3] Hamblin ends this chapter: "I find now that it is no longer necessary to follow any set system of meditation — but only to *know* God and to feel immersed in His peace, and to feel His peace flowing through me like a river".

In October 1921 he published the first number of a new monthly magazine, *The Science of Thought Review*[4] which was an immediate success and is still helping thousands of people. Soon, however, he was to go through experiences which were to test him thoroughly. After having "reduced prayer to an exact science that could be used successfully to clear any situation",[5] he suddenly found that his prayers were useless and God seemed to have removed Himself from him. He was brought to what the saints call the place of "noughting". He felt himself threatened by a tremendous evil which he was powerless to combat and yet felt he must resist. His peace of mind was restored when God suddenly spoke to him in a verse from an old hymn:

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessing on your head".

Then he realised that instead of dreading and resisting the experience, he had to accept it and trust God, knowing that only good could come out of it.

This implied complete surrender to God, and from then on that was the very core of his teaching. This decision to change, and teach the necessity to "give all to life" instead of a method of "getting on in life" cost Hamblin a great deal, for it meant the withdrawal and destruction of all his old books and courses of instruction and the issue of new ones. Above all, of course, was the enormous amount of energy and time required to set forth his new teaching. Throughout it all, however, he was remarkably upheld by that Infinite Love Whose behest he was obeying. Many of his old students and followers left him because they could not accept his new teaching. They had grown accustomed to using spiritual powers in order to overcome difficult experiences and "get on in life", whereas Hamblin was now teaching the necessity to accept the "disciplines and chastenings" of life, work through them and learn as much as possible from them, leaving the outcome entirely in God's hands. As he himself wrote: "My one desire now is to help aspirants to find God and enter into Divine Union".[6]

Hamblin's own spiritual development was obviously going on apace at this time, but soon he was to enter a period of darkness such as he had never known. With the outbreak of war in 1939 he found himself violently assailed by those Dark Forces whose object is to destroy the Children of Light. Instead of the consciousness of communion with God to which he had been accustomed it seemed impossible to find God or realise His Presence. "I could no longer retire into the Inner Chamber of my soul and find God there as Infinite Joy, Peace and Bliss indescribable. There was nothing but darkness and the seeming despair and lamentations of countless millions of lost souls . . . I seemed

[2] *My Search for Truth*, page 61.
[3] *Ibid.*, page 64.
[4] *Ibid.*, page 76.
[5] Specimen copy free from *The Science of Thought Review*, Bosham House, Chichester.
[6] *My Search for Truth*, page 85.

to be in the grip of all the Powers of Darkness from which there seemed no way of escape ".[7]

This was the beginning of a long series of psychic attacks, during the course of which he was visited by evil presences that made every hair of his head literally stand on end. Eventually, however, he found that to make use of the name of Jesus was an infallible way of dealing with them. Jesus proved to be literally a saviour to him, and lifted him up to a new consciousness of the Divine Presence and of freedom. In his later years his teaching on prayer frequently stressed the power in the Name of Jesus and advocated using it constantly in our prayers. He himself became a Jesus-dedicated man, following Him even to the extent of not trying in any way to side-step, or wipe out by affirmation and realisation any of the tests and trials with which life confronted him. He came to regard some form of Gethsemane[8] experience as inevitable if we wish to attain the highest spiritual development, and himself did not escape or seek to escape it. " The object of these experiences is to bring us into God's peace . . . everything is designed for our good and in order to bring us into His perfect peace . . . God's inward peace is Heaven's most precious gift, for if we possess it we possess all things. The Divine Will is good ; hence we eventually learn that all we need pray for is for the Divine will to be done, whether we are concerned with our welfare or that of others. The Perfect Order continues ; that is, it is always in a state of ' presentness ' ; it is always in the Eternal Now and it does not wax or wane. What is needed is that we should conform to it . . . We belong to the Eternal and interiorly we are one with That which changeth not ; the interior Order flows ceaselessly, in perfect harmony ".[9]

When one met H.T.H. one was always aware of the deep peace and love which pervaded his entire being and emanated from him. One eventually learned, too, that he had a pronounced sense of humour. I was highly amused when he told me the story of how some man had approached him to enlist his support for a film project intended to portray the life of Jesus. " But ", said H.T.H. " I sent him away with a flea in his ear " ! The gleam in H.T.H's eye and the chuckle and glee in his voice as he recounted it to me is still a joy to remember. " I was not going to have anything to do with putting Jesus on a film ", he concluded.

His regard for Jesus did not prevent him from appreciating the writings and teachings of Eastern writers, particularly Lao Tse, whom he quoted occasionally in his writings. Indeed, he sometimes remarked that what he had discovered for himself had long ago been taught by others. He was no narrow sectarian and had friends in various shades of religious thought. A few years before he died he had a visit from Swami Ramdas which was eminently satisfying to both men. Truth is truth no matter by whom spoken, and each recognised the spiritual stature and sincerity of the other. Men such as these are the " little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump " in the crass materialism of this world.

Yet Hamblin was nothing if not human. He knew all about the trials of every-day life and the mistakes we are all liable to make. One day we were talking about past mistakes when he quietly said to me : " I don't take much notice of my past mistakes now. You see, I know now I had to come that way ". The man who said that had in earlier years known heart-searching remorse and regret, but in the meantime he had acquired that wisdom that can come only from the realisation of the Divine Omnipresence and all that that implies.

In H.T.H. I salute one who had attained the capacity to abide in the realisation of the Divine Omnipresence, and who was to me a much loved teacher and friend.

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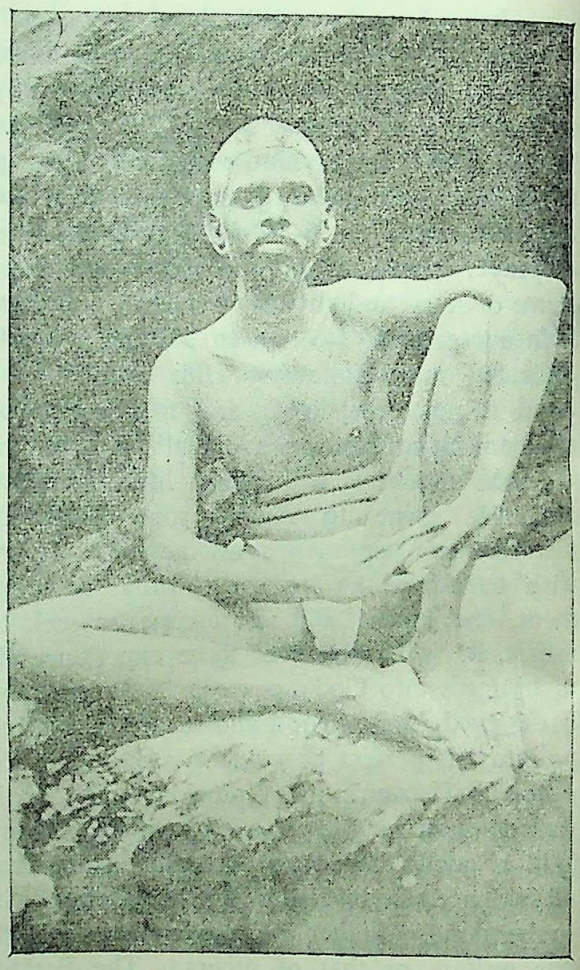
[7] *Ibid.*, page 109.
[8] *Luke* 22, vv. 39-46.
[9] *My Search for Truth*, p. 157 ff.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

THE GOLDEN FLAME

ANONYMOUS

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi personifies, to many devotees, the Universal Father. Instances are many when devotees felt that they were looking at their own father when they saw Bhagavan. I vividly remember a friend of our family, who had accompanied us to Sri Ramanasramam in 1947, exclaim in delight, as soon as he saw Bhagavan, "Here is my father, just as he looked in his later life!" Far back in 1933, when my own father was drawn to Bhagavan Ramana for the first time, he actually saw 'his father', with the same physical traits. And as recently as 1966, after the passing of my father, I cannot but be touched by the striking resemblance between his and Bhagavan's appearance, although such an impression was not altogether new to me. Indeed, Bhagavan Sri Ramana is the embodiment of *"Fatherhood"*, that is at once universal and transcendental.



On the sacred occasion of the Mahakumbabhishekam of Sri Bhagavan's shrine,[1] many an illustrious pen poured forth its spontaneous homage to His Lotus Feet. Before them, mine is like a candle before the splendour of the sun. Nonetheless, the inner urge to share an experience of mine, I would call it the most sacred and valuable experience in all my life, blots out my hesitation. It is just an insignificant parijata flower in the midst of thousands of fragrant roses.

Experiences with Sri Bhagavan and His Grace used to be recounted very often by my father together with other incidents in his life, rich with spiritual lessons. A boy of about twelve then, I used to listen avidly and as a result, these narrations took a deep root in me, ripening into an incessant desire to have Bhagavan's darshan, to touch Him and to be always near Him. During my daily prayers, my mind used to fix itself on the frontispiece photograph of Bhagavan Ramana, appearing in his books and fervently ask for his darshan. As time rolled by, the yearning intensified but no call came. Once or twice I ventured to ask my father about it, but he used to simply brush it aside with the remark, "If and when Bhagavan calls you, you will go."

[1] Performed on 18-6-1967 — a detailed account of which is published, with photographs, in our issue for July, 1967.

Then one day the first experience came. I think it was in 1945. One night, during deep sleep, I dreamt that I was sitting in the corner of a room, waiting for somebody. I then saw Bhagavan Ramana slowly enter the room and I rushed to Him and held Him around the waist with both my hands, crying and supplicating. But Bhagavan simply passed on with apparent unconcern. I woke up and thought of it for a long time. It seemed so disappointing that there was no response from Him. However, I felt confidence since at last I had seen Him and touched Him, which proved that He had not forsaken me.

Now I began to think of Him more and more. Yet again, for a long time nothing happened.

Once more I was becoming desperate and losing hope. Then one dark night, He appeared and initiated me out of His boundless love. This time it was more of a vision than a dream. I was half awake and felt myself rising from bed and walking into the courtyard of our house. Total silence enveloped the entire surroundings. The blanket of darkness was accentuated by the twinkling stars above. I found myself standing still on a mound of sand, facing westward, looking, looking, looking. Slowly out of the darkness emerged the outline of a hill, shaped exactly like the Holy Arunachala. Emerging, it steadied itself into a discernible silhouette, by remaining darker than the dark background. After a few minutes, a small flame leapt out of the apex of the hill. In the beginning, it was just like an eye in vertical position, but very swiftly it grew and grew until it became a pillar of light, with extraordinary brightness, having the hilltop as its base and origin. Its height touched the very heavens. Its splendour was beyond description. It was just the shape of the flame of a lamp when it burns steadily golden coloured, shining as if a thousand suns had arisen together. Its golden rays fell on my body. I was riveted to the spot and found that I could move neither hand nor foot. I stood there as one totally hypnotised, oblivious of anything else but the burning golden flame. My mind was in raptures, throbbing with an ecstatical joy, which seemed to burst out of my body. How long I stood like this I cannot say, for time seemed to stop altogether. Then I became conscious of the scene, and felt that I was not alone, in that spot. With an effort, I turned my face to the right and found Bhagavan Sri Ramana was standing there, looking at me. On his lips played the most bewitching smile, while his eyes poured out boundless compassion and love. When I saw Him, I forgot the Jyothi and everything else and tried to fall at his feet. But He gently stopped me by placing His Divine Hand upon my head. Joy of joys ! My whole being, inner and outer, thrilled to that Divine touch from the hand of one who is no other than God. Waves of bliss and tranquillity took possession of my whole being. He raised his forefinger and pointed at the Golden Flame and asked me in a voice resembling the sound of silver bells, " Child, do you understand what the Jyothi is ? This is the real Karthigai Deepam."

Suddenly I was wide awake, ushered by consciousness into the care and worry-ridden world. Subsequent visions have followed, all of them showing Bhagavan as the personification of supreme love, but none could ever match the splendour of this first vision and initiation.

I no longer felt dissatisfied at not being able to go to the Ashram in a physical sense, though I must confess, occasionally the desire did arise.

In 1947, I was proceeding to Madras from Coimbatore. The train was speeding along some hills in the night when a prayer to be allowed to visit the Ashram took shape in me. As I was accompanying my father, who did not entertain ideas from children, I did not talk of the prayer to anyone. A few days later, when we were to return to Coimbatore, my father suddenly asked me how I would like to go to Ramanasramam and have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. I am not ashamed

to record here that I broke into tears on hearing this, as this was a prayer so graciously granted by Sri Bhagavan.

The next day, we were in our home — Sri Ramanasramam. It was a Friday and a New Moon day. As I entered the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Ramana, I felt that I was submerging in a sea, only this was a sea of bliss of tranquillity.

We were there the whole of the forenoon and excepting for a swift, piercing look that Sri Bhagavan blessed me with, nothing happened. Nothing mattered any more.

When I heard later that Sri Bhagavan had shed His mortal frame, a few tear-drops rolled down my cheeks, but my father sternly said, "You are a fool. Where can Bhagavan go?"

Years have rolled by; still the Torch burns on, gathering more and more brightness. It is the torch that He, out of His boundless Grace, lit in my heart. Now my children, in their turn, ask me: "Father, when will Bhagavan Thatha come to us?". I feel too full to reply to them, yet sometimes say, "All in good time, children. Learn to labour and to wait."

When the messenger comes, carrying the authority of inexorable time may my heart surrender to Him and may my lips whisper, *"Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya"*.

Bhagavan: Creation is neither good nor bad; it is as it is. It is the human mind which puts all sorts of constructions on it, as it sees things from its own angle and as it suits its own interests. A woman is just a woman, but one mind calls her 'mother', another 'sister' and still another 'aunt', and so on. Men love women, hate snakes, and are indifferent to the grass and stones by the road side. These connections are the causes of all the misery in the world. Creation is like a peepul tree; birds come to eat its fruit, or shelter themselves under its branches, men cool themselves in its shade, but some may hang themselves on it. Yet the tree continues to lead its quiet life, unconcerned with, and unaware of all the uses it is put to. It is the human mind that creates its own trouble and then cries for help. Is God so partial as to give peace to one and sorrow to another? In creation there is room for everything, but man refuses to see the good, the healthy and the beautiful and goes on whining like the hungry man, who sits beside a tasty dish and, instead of stretching out his hand to satisfy his hunger, he prefers to lament. Whose fault is it, God's or man's? But fortunately for man God, in His infinite mercy, never forsakes him. He always gives new chances by providing Gurus and Scriptures to guide him to find the errors of his ways and ultimately gain eternal happiness.

— From *Guru Ramana*.

THE DIVINE PRISM

By
GLADYS DE MEUTER

IN his pursuit of Wisdom the student of heavenly lore passes from exotericism to the inner heart of esotericism where he receives knowledge of the transcendent Truth of Unity. This Unity cannot be realized on the external level where a multiplicity of traditional religious forms exist ; it is only when these forms are transcended that a beautiful harmony is revealed where the religions of the world appear as a heavenly rainbow issuing from One uncoloured Light.

He who adheres to the outward aspect of the Tradition often allows error to cloud the truth, namely, that it is the selfsame Spirit which vivifies all forms of religion. This lack of understanding gives birth to prejudice and intolerant dogmatism which is responsible for the belief that other religions are false and one's own the only true faith. Yet spiritual blindness cannot last, for Wisdom visits all sincere hearts. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna : 'An ignorant man considers his own religion to be the best, but when true understanding illumines his mind, all differences melt away. He knows that the one Sat-Chit-Ananda (Absolute Existence — Intelligence Bliss) is named God by some, and Hari, Brahman and Allah by others.'

The spiritual aspirant should therefore strive towards a closer understanding of other religions, for they are many rays emerging from the same luminous Source — rays which as Tennyson wrote :

'. . . are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.'

To the four corners of the earth have been given divine truths, garbed in the regal robe of simplicity.

Gautama the Buddha taught in Asia : 'Hatred does not end by hatred at any time, hatred ends by love. This is an old rule.' (Dhammapada 5).

'Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us. Among men who hate us let us be free from hatred.' (Ibid. 5).

Jesus the Christ taught the children of Israel : "Ye have heard that it was said 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy', but I say unto you 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you'." (St Mathew V, 43).

In China the venerable Laotzu said : 'Selflessness belongs to the truly wise. They make the people's needs their own. The good are treated in kindly fashion, likewise are the bad ; this is called the goodness of Teh. The faithful are treated with faith ; the faithless receive like treatment, this is called the faith of Teh . . . These wise ones regard all people as their own.' (Tao-Teh-King 49).

Sri Krishna instructed Arjuna thus : 'In truth, he is beloved and near to me, who harbours no ill-will or malice towards any being or thing ; who is a lover of Nature and her friend — who is compassionate, humble and free of vanity and selfishness — who suffers wrongs and injustices patiently . . . with mind ever fixed on Me.' (Bhagavad-Gita XI).

In Arabia the prophet of Allah, Muhammad, taught his people : 'It is the duty of every Muslim to practise charity. If he has nothing to give, let him perform a good deed, or refrain from doing an evil one.' (Hadith 48).

'Do not say I will be good to those who are good to me, and oppress those that oppress

me. But instead, be good to those who are good to you but oppress not those who oppress you.' (Ibid 181).

Filled with the spirit of discernment Origen wrote : 'There exist diverse forms of the Word which reveals Itself to Its disciples, conforming Itself to the degree of understanding of each one according to the degree of their spirituality. (Contra Cels. iv. 16).

Truly then, the Word of God has manifested Itself in many lands, and where the holy feet have trod Truth has taken root and blossomed forth.

In the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' is written : 'Behold, my powerful and sacred Word will I send forth into all places, that it may give birth to every right thing.'

The Bhagavad-Gita gives voice to beautiful song : 'I am the Father of this Universe . . . I am the Wisdom of the wise. I am the sacred Word AUM . . . Seated in the heart, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all.'

St. John the mystic records in the New Testament : 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

Universal Substance (Prakriti) plays an important part in World Religions. In Egypt the Mother of the World is depicted as the Virgin Isis with the infant Horus in her arms. Upon a temple dedicated to her is graven : 'I am all that hath been, that is or that will be — no mortal hath yet removed the veil that shades my divinity from profane eyes.'

The Compassionate aspect of God is symbolised in China by Kwan Yin, she who carries a pitcher from which fall the Waters of Life. The willow spray with which the Mother is depicted denotes that asperging with heavenly dew which awakens and purifies the soul.

The Western world reveres Maria, Madonna of Graces. From Her flow innumerable blessings, and to Her are directed the cries of afflicted hearts :

'To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears,

Turn then most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us.' (Hail Holy Queen. Catholic Missal).

Solomon the Sage wrote : 'Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.' (Prov. 3.17).

Those yearning for tenderness and love have been universally directed towards the gentle heart of the World Mother.

Harmlessness (ahimsa) figures prominently in the teachings of the wise. And although true harmlessness aims at the perfection of Good Thought, Good Word and Good Deed, it necessarily includes benevolence towards all creatures.

A beautiful saying of Muhammad is found in Hadith 31. 'It happened one day that an adultress passed by a dog at a well. Seeing that the dog held out a thirsty tongue, the woman removed her shoe, tied it to the hem of her robe and drew water for the dog to drink. For this act of compassion, her sin was forgiven her.'

The Mahabharata relates how Yudhishthira, arriving at heaven's gate, refused to enter therein until he had gained assurance that his dog as well as his wife and brothers were permitted entry.

Buddha stood firm against the practice of animal sacrifice, as did Zarathustra. Likewise did David the Sage-king, who wrote : 'O Lord . . . thou desirest not sacrifice : else would I give it : thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart.' (Ps. 51. 16-17).

Because the essentials in world religions have been bypassed, and the inessentials stressed, the perennial wisdom has become obscured by sectarianism. Too much emphasis has been laid on the differences existing between religions, while too little importance

has been given to the Universal Love which unites them.

Ibn Arabi said : 'I am an adherent of the religion of Love — wherever his camels take me, I follow.'

The wise Buddhist Asoka wrote in his Rock Edict : 'Asoka does not value wealth or fame as highly as he does the promotion of understanding between religions . . . A man must duly respect other religions on every occasion — to be in harmony is wisdom. It is Asoka's desire that all sects should be full of knowledge and should aid one another.'

The 'living waters' are to be found in all faiths. On the journey to the Summit, pilgrims should refresh themselves at these fountains of Peace.

The heart which wakens to the beauty alive in other religions experiences a sweet stirring within, as many facets of Truth are revealed and, like the mystic, perceives in all places of worship One Shrine alone.

When the truth-seeker receives knowledge that all hymns of Love are directed towards the One God, he will not hesitate to share in the prayers of mankind.

Just as in ancient Egypt the neophyte communed with Amen-Ra-Ptah the heavenly Father whose abode is the Quiet-Heart, so the pilgrim will compose his own prayer when visiting an Egyptian temple :

'Hail to Thee, whose Love flows sweetly through all things.
Thy Song is enshrined in the heart of every creature, plant, mineral, and in the whisper of the breeze.
My heart's Mother ! Like Hapi the Nile Thou sendest forth thy life-sustaining coolness to all.
When the choking, barren dust of ignorance rises within me, I call on Thee.
May my heart-soul drink its fill at Thy Well of Truth,
And journey safely through the field of stars to Amenti.
Glorious Luminary ! banish the darkness within me,
So that when I stand before Lord Osiris in the Judgement-Hall
My heart may sing : 'I am pure — I am pure.'

When the pilgrim enters the precincts of a Jade Monastery perched high above the valley, and stands with a Taoist beside a waterfall, he will utter this silent prayer springing spontaneously from the heart :

'O Nameless Tao, Thou who dost operate ceaselessly in unbroken rythm,
My heart bows to Thee in wonder.
Thou hast sent a river of quiet into my depths.
Thou hast given wisdom to my tongue, so that where before it spoke because it did not know,
Now it is silent before the known.
Wondrous Tao, Thou art Knowledge beyond that of the intellect,
And art perfection in Thy impartiality.
O Thou, which art the Essence of my being, may sincerity be the lighted lamp leading me away from hypocrisy and error.'

Observing a Hindu devotee performing puja before a shrine, the pilgrim may be stirred to sing his own song in the silence :

'Lord Shiva, still my mind, purify my heart
So that I may enter the tranquility of sacred Stillness.
Blue-throated Shiva, King of ascetics, strip me of attachment to worldly things ; kindle in my breast the cleansing fire of renunciation.
Lift Thou the veil of Maya from before my inner eye.
May understanding illumine my mind

And lead me to Self-Knowledge.

Guru within my secret heart — holy Beacon of Light!

I take the dust of Thy Feet.

Om. Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

And when the call to prayer issues forth from the muezzin and the faithful prostrate their bodies, the pilgrim will also be invited to commune with Allah in his own spirit-tongue :

'Praised be the Name of the Most High

Who caused Heaven and earth to come into being,

Through His mighty Will.

To Thee am I self-surrendered, and therefore a Muslim.

At Ramadan, may my heart abstain from feeding on worldly attachments,

Thus may my fast be pleasing to Thee.

In my dealings with others, may I see Thee mirrored in my brother's face,

And so in Peace abide.

Finally, kneeling before a candlelit altar at the side of a Christian, the pilgrim will fix his ardent gaze upon the crucifix, and compose his own Canticle to the Prince of Love.

'Radiant Heart of Life!

I am encompassed by Thy tender understanding.

When the indifference of men scourges me, I hear

Thy Love-Song which administers healing.

When the ego-foes jeer and mock me as I fall upon the Way,

Thy strong arms bear me up, and I feel Thy compassionate

Kiss of forgiveness upon my tears.

As an infant nestles close to its parent, so do I find refuge in Thy Sacred Heart.

Amen.

How joyfully and harmoniously earthly flowers grow side by side! Likewise in the Celestial Garden, the different blooms of Religion form One fragrant Bouquet, for the seeds have been sown by the Hand of God.

Devotee : What is the purpose of creation?

Bhagavan : Can the eye see itself?

D. : Of course not. It can see everything else but not itself.

B. : But if it wants to see itself?

D. : It can see itself only reflected in a mirror.

B. : That is it. Creation is the mirror for the eye to see itself.

Another devotee : Does Bhagavan mean 'eye' or 'I'?

Bhagavan : You may take it figuratively as 'eye' and literally as 'I'.

— From *Ramana Reminiscences.*

WAS CHRIST AN AVATAR?

By
H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

I have just been reading a book which declares that Christ was not what the Hindus mean by 'Avatar' but something much more. There is no need to give the title of the book or the name of the author, because it is by no means alone in its declaration. Many Christian writers have said the same. This, of course, raises the question what the Hindus do mean by 'Avatar'. The explanation given was so vague and perfunctory that it prompted me to turn to the Bhagavad Gita and see what Krishna himself meant by it. Reading that, I began to wonder whether the author of the book I mentioned had ever read it himself and what he meant by 'something much more'. Here are some of the statements of what it means :—

"Supporting this whole universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain as I am." (X, 42)

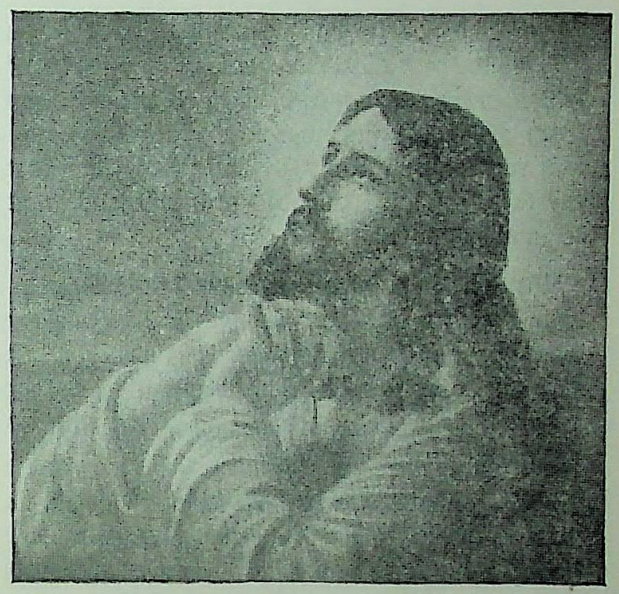
"I am the Self dwelling in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all beings." (X, 20)

"Knowing Me to be the Source of all and all to emanate from Me, the wise worship Me with understanding." (X, 8)

"No action is incumbent on Me in the three worlds, nor is there anything unattained for Me to attain, yet do I act . . . If I ever ceased from action, these worlds would fall in ruin." (III, 22-24)

"Though I am the Unborn and Deathless Self, though I am the Lord of all beings, yet, resorting to My Nature, I take birth through My own Power." (IV, 6)

"Whenever righteousness decays and wrong prevails I incarnate. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil and for the establishment of right, I take birth from age to age." (IV, 7-8)



Jesus Christ

"In whatever way men approach Me, in that way do I come to them. All the paths men follow lead to Me." (IV, 11)

"I shall not be lost to him who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, nor will he be lost to Me." (VI, 30)

"Out of thousands, perhaps one strives for perfection ; out of thousands who strive, perhaps one knows Me as I am. I am the origin of the whole universe and also its dissolution. There is nothing higher than Me. All this is strung on Me like beads on a string." (VII, 7)

I had thought of going systematically through the Gita and picking out such declarations, but is there any need ? Is this not enough to make the "something much more" sound like a vulgar bazaar cry of "My religion is better than your religion" ?

INTEGRATION

By WEI WU WEI

I

THE Maharshi is recorded as having stated: "*Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware.* No one is ever away from his self and therefore everyone is in fact self-realised; only — and this is the great mystery — people do not know this and want to realise the Self."

Further, he is stated to have said "*Realisation consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realised.* It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for."

"To remain without question or doubt is your natural state . . . *the Self is always here.* You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self."

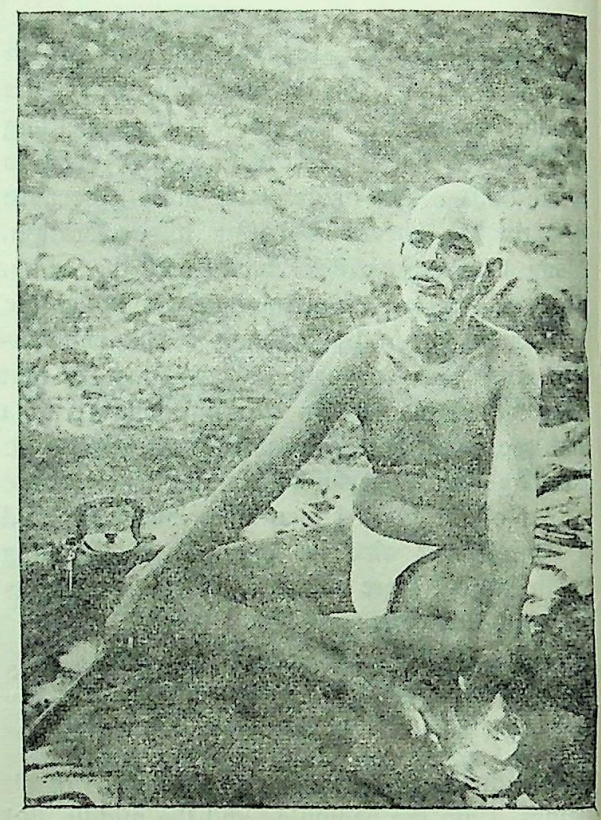
I have italicised the passages to which I shall particularly refer.

Let us analyse the above, briefly: "Consciousness" and "Self" are concepts — objectifications in mind, and of 'being-conscious'[1] nobody can be conscious, for *'being aware' is not objective knowledge of state of awareness but is subjective awareness as such.*

II

"The veil obstructing revelation of the Self" is precisely this situation in which identities find themselves, whereby their relative aspect of mind is constitutionally and forever (in space-time) unable to conceive its own wholeness in terms of its relative concepts.

They have only to look? No doubt: the Maharshi implies that this is so, and he surely knew. But they could never *see* their own wholeness by means of relative reasoning. They must look from whole-mind wherein



there is no 'they' to look nor any 'thing' to be seen.

Therefore we can assume that the Maharshi's doctrine, which may be summarised as asking 'Who am I?' is, metaphysically, an abandonment of conceptual thinking in favour of direct appreception in mind undivided into subject/object-reasoning by the comparison of opposing concepts.

Whole-mind, however, cannot be supposed to answer this question, for to whole-mind there can be no question — since the answer must be what is asking. Being no question, there can be no answer, or at any rate no

[1] 'Consciousness' as such is a noun and therefore denotes an object, whereas here what is implied can have no objective quality whatever. For this reason the implication can only be suggested by the present participle of a verb, i.e. 'being conscious'.

answer other than 'I' or 'I-I' — which can be understood as the answer to all questions.

Is there anything further that can be said? Or anything further that can be done? Since there is evidently no one present or absent to do it, all 'ones' being objective concepts, any attempt could only be an exercise of the volitional aspect of an I-concept, and very perfectly futile.

But what does the question "Who am I?" imply? Is it not a symbol, a prayer — of course in the noumenal sense of 'communion'? 'The noumenal sense' implies exclusion of the concept of one entity 'communing' with another conceptual entity, and *requires absolute integration.*

III

In greater detail, the reason why there is no answer to the Maharshi's question is that conceptually there cannot be anyone to understand, anything to be understood, or any material for imaginative activity. What we are is very precisely what we are now and forever, and nothing else at all, and for the excellent reason that anything else must be an objective concept and so *could not be* what we are. Indeed THIS cannot be 'thought' about at all, and the question is its own answer.

"The Self is *always here",* he states. Yes, indeed, and the "veil obstructing the revelation of the Self" is precisely the effort, any and every effort, to objectify what is "always here". The words "To remain without question or doubt is your natural state" reinforces the crystal clarity of this understanding, for what could there be to question or to doubt when the suchness of what I am is evident?

To complete this analysis of the Maharshi's total statement as quoted, his remark "This is the great mystery — people do not know this and *want to realise the Self"* is hardly likely to mean that it was a mystery, let alone a 'great' one, to the Maharshi, but just that it appears to relative mind to be a great mystery but is not such at all. Therefore it should imply that if people knew this they would not try to realise the 'Self' — which he has just said is already 'realised'.

Why, then, is this 'wanting to realise the Self' not in fact a mystery? Surely because 'people' do not understand that the 'wanting' is due to the volitional aspect of their divided mind which 'wants' to do something by means of its pseudo 'self', and 'wants' that pseudo-self to 'realise' *another* 'Self'? But there is no 'other Self', there is no 'self' at all — the phenomenal 'self' being an object volitionally assuming an imaginary subjectivity, and the noumenal 'Self' being a conceptual image in the mind of divided consciousness.

The Mystery, then, is the result of this inherence in relative mind whereby a conceiver is assumed and every thought must be an objective concept, which process could never result in what is somewhat unhappily termed '*real*-isation' of what-I-am, since what-I-am could not have any objective quality whatever.

'Mystery' is a term indicating something that has not been understood and which, once understood, is no longer a mystery. It is only necessary to *cease the absurd endeavour to objectify what we are* as being the answer to the query "Who am I?", since this necessarily is already 'realised', for it is nothing that could be realised conceptually, and *I am This 'I Am'.*

Therefore, finally and absolutely, the understanding that there can be no one to understand and nothing to be understood IS understanding "what I am" — for the Sought is then found to be the Seeker.

IV

To suggest that the indication of this process was an exclusive invention of the Maharshi would surely do no honour to his memory, for all the Sages of all the ages have sought to point out to us the way to integration, and their indications have necessarily been in the

same direction. The Christian and Sufi saints were conditioned to use terms such as 'Godhead' and 'Allah', rather than 'Self', and the Buddhist Sages asked "Who is it who is repeating the name of the Buddha?". Since all point in the same direction, and since all proved the efficacy of their teaching, the value of that teaching is enhanced by the evidence of each, for the variation in presentation is a matter of contemporary conditioning and the environment in which the teaching was given.

Nevertheless it may well be asked whether any of these great teachers presented their experience and their counsel with the concision and clarity of the Maharshi's statements quoted above. For the world of to-day these few lines of his may surely be regarded as revelatory and complete to a degree that is unique in history. But it is for us to understand them correctly — since what is being pointed at has never been said, is not said here, and never will be said as long as mankind is obliged to reason by means of the relative aspect of mind,

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Note: The phenomenal incidence of disidentification is commonly associated with sudden consciousness of a superior and permanent psychic condition. This readjustment, consequent on revelatory understanding, is outside the scope of this technical analysis.

But it may be asked 'How does this happen?" One may suggest that at the moment of ceasing to look for himself, of ceasing to regard what he is, *as an object*, at that instant at which the searcher ceases to assume that he is what he is not and could not be, a spontaneous readjustment occurs. He is disidentified in his time-sequence and his intemporal non-entity remains.

Can that be so? Rather let us ask whether it can be otherwise. Presumably because the cessation of the volitional objectivisation-process leaves him revealed as all that he has ever been, in the perfect equanimity of non-duality. The temporal sequence of perpetual objectivisation has been interrupted and intemporality has supervened. In a geometrical image, the horizontal sequence of his 'time' has been cut and the verticality of his intemporal dimension has been recovered. He has 'died', like Lazarus, and found that he is still alive, but more fully than he had ever imagined could be possible.

A devotee wrote a question on a piece of paper and gave it to the Maharshi. Bhagavan read it and smiled broadly. It was a question on Time and Space.

Bhagavan: May I know who is putting this question — Space, yourself or Time?

Devotee: Of course I.

B.: Do you know that I?

D.: Leave the I-question to the philosophers and answer my question.

B.: What? Is Time or Space dearer to you than your own Self? (Seeing the visitor non-plussed) — All these questions are superfluous. One thing you must bear in mind that no question can be asked without self-knowledge. On the realization of the Self everything becomes clear and all problems are solved.

— From *Guru Ramana.*

THE PLACE OF ISLAM IN HISTORY

By
ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

ISLAM holds a peculiar place in history, being the concluding enunciation of religion for this cycle. This is indicated in the Quran in the saying that Mohammed is the 'Seal of the Prophets'.[1]

The Semitic tradition begins with the pure monotheism of Abraham, from which both the Jewish and Arabic trends descend. "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but an upright man and a Muslim."[2] The word 'Muslim' here obviously has its simple meaning of 'one who is submitted to God' and its application to Abraham represents a viewpoint from which Islam is more primordial than either Judaeism or Christianity. These were two moulds into which the original pure monotheism was later cast; and Abraham, being prior to them, was subject to neither. Nor was Islam which, coming after them, returned to the original pure monotheism. "Indeed, the closest to Abraham are those who follow him and this Prophet (Mohammed) and who believe."[3]

The pristine purity of a people and its religion declines in course of time.[4] Stringent regulations become necessary to hold people to what was once followed freely. Thus the Law of Moses became necessary for the Jews. To say that it was a degeneration from the freer and less formal tradition of Abraham does not imply any criticism of Moses. It was what had become necessary. Similarly when the Jews adopted kingship at a later stage it was clearly stated in their scriptures that this was a concession made necessary by their spiritual and moral decline.

The next transformation brought about in the tradition was that of Christ, and to some extent it was a return to Abraham, since it replaced the rigidity of law by the flexibility of love. However it was never completed; it remained a world-renouncing path for the few, not a world-sanctifying religion for the whole community. Once again, it implies no criticism to say that it remained incomplete, because Christ himself said so. In his final message to his disciples he told them: "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now."[5] Then when? obviously not in this lifetime because his teaching for this lifetime was being brought to an end. In fact he specified that it was not he who was to complete his message by teaching them the 'many things' that still remained but the 'Comforter' who was to come after him. Who was this 'Comforter'? And how was he to teach? Christ gave the necessary clue when he elucidated that he would not speak of himself but only what he heard or what was revealed to him.[6] Christians declare that he was referring to the coming of the Holy Ghost, but that does not tally. The Holy Ghost is held to be one of the three aspects or Persons of God; and how can it be said that God does not speak of Himself but only what is revealed to Him? The only person whom the prophecy does fit is Mohammed. In fact the particular characteristic of Mohammed among the Prophets was that he did not compose the Quran ("speak of himself") but heard it revealed piecemeal in states of trance and, on awakening from the trance, recited what he had heard — exactly as Christ had prophesied. It is a remarkable confirmation of this (if any were needed) that the Greek word 'Paraklete', which is translated

[1] XXXIII, 40.
[2] *Quran*, III, 66.
[3] *Ibid.*, III, 67.
[4] cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 1 and 2.
[5] *St. John*, XVI, 12.
[6] *Ibid.*, 13.

as 'Comforter' is equivalent except for one letter to the Arabic 'Ahmed', which is the more esoteric form of 'Mohammed'.

Thus we see that Islam was not only the consummation of the Semitic monotheistic tradition which arose with Abraham but also, more specifically, the first stage in the completion of the original Christianity, transforming it from a world-renouncing path for the few into a world-sanctifying religion for a whole community. I say 'the first stage' because a second and final stage of completion (which also Christ prophesied) is to be the Second Coming of Christ.

How does Islam stand with regard to this? The Quran says nothing about it, but there are hadiths or sayings of the Prophet referring to it. The common Western idea that the 'Mehdi' expected by Muslims is the same as the Second Coming of Christ is incorrect. He is to come as the forerunner of Christ and is therefore more equivalent to John the Baptist. It is prophesied in the hadiths that Christ is to reappear in the Middle East and as a Muslim.

This points to a very urgent problem: The Jews did not recognize the first coming of their Messiah in Christ; the Christians did not recognize the first stage in the completion of Christianity in the institution of Islam; what likelihood is there that either Jews or Christians will recognize the final consummation of their religion in the Second Coming of Christ? Or that Muslims will either? If Abraham, through whom the Semitic monotheism had its origin, is referred to as a 'Muslim' in the sense of 'submitted to God' although he lived centuries before the religion known as 'Islam' was instituted, what more likely than that he through whom this monotheism is to attain its consummation should be a 'Muslim' in the same informal sense? In that case, is it not to be expected that once again only those few who, as Christ put it, "have ears to hear" should recognize the new Messenger and his Message and the orthodox in all three religions reject it?

A devotee complained to Sri Bhagavan that although he had riches, power and every material comfort, he could not find peace.

Bhagavan: Why do you want peace? Why can't you be as you are?

Devotee: Because I don't feel happy otherwise.

Bhagavan: It is like this. A man suffering from headache will not rest quiet until he has taken the right medicine and got rid of the ailment. For health is our nature, and not illness. Likewise peace is our nature. Indeed we are peace. But forgetting that, we seek peace from external sources. It is an impossible quest and causes all this trouble. The moment you withdraw your mind from external objects and turn inward, you taste real peace and feel happy.

— From *Ramana Reminiscences.*

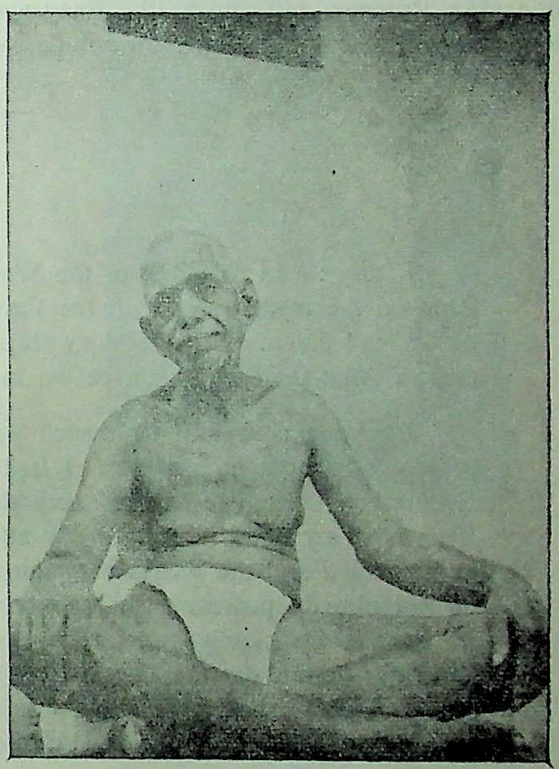
SUFFERING AND THE SUFFERER

By
ARUN SHARMA

This is the first time that Arun Sharma has written for us, but his father was the late T. K. Sundaresa Iyer who was one of the earliest devotees and one of our first contributors (for whom see our obituary on page 136 of April 1965). We are glad to see Arun following in his father's footsteps.

WILL Durant says in his 'Story of Civilization, An Oriental Heritage' ". . . since the real problem of life is not suffering but undeserved suffering, the religion of India mitigates the human tragedy by giving meaning and value to grief and pain . . ."

Does it? On the one hand the West no less than the East, has brooded over suffering, deserved and undeserved, while on the other hand it is obvious that human tragedy cannot cease to be tragedy until a man discovers the imperishable and therefore invulnerable element in him. In order to do so the human element in him has to be killed out to the point that there will not exist any one to experience grief or pain. Unless the experiencer goes the experience of pain will continue. When asked about suffering, Bhagavan Ramana used to say that you can only destroy suffering by destroying the sufferer, that is the ego who mistakes himself for you. When body identification has been killed grief and pain are accepted as phantasmagoria, as the shadows of a dreamland. Karma, karta and karmaphalam, the deed, the doer and the outcome of the deed, are bleached of reality the moment the real karta, that is the Self, the real doer of the deed, is realized. He, the Atma, puts an end to the illusory self and his claim to be the doer and enjoyer of the action. Then no problem of karma remains. This is the solution offered by Bhagavan Ramana and Shankaracharya and the sastras. No other solution goes the whole way or answers the problem.



A solution is also offered on the basis of bhakti, which solves the problem by surrender, and indeed, Bhagavan himself used to say that there are two ways, to enquire into the Self or to surrender; but this second method is not as different from the first as might appear. In terms of Jnana we speak of the Inner Being, while in terms of bhakti we speak of the Lord who bears the whole burden. But recognizing the Inner Being as the Lord is also surrender, while seeing the Lord to be the Inner Being is also Jnana.

There is also the question of whether one finds the worship of images or a Personal God necessary. Kapilacharya found that the strong root of avidya or ignorance-of-Self could best be eradicated by insistence on a Personal God, a possibility stipulated by the Brahma Sutras. Shankaracharya was not opposed to this, though his personal experience had led him to the way of the Absolute, which he found to be the most far-reaching. Having found it to be so, he offered it in the first place, just as did Bhagavan Ramana, but, again like Bhagavan Ramana, when he found that the aptitude for it was lacking he directed the seeker to what was within his competence; and this was likely to be the path of Saguna Brahma, the Personal God, leading to heavenly beatitude. Bhagavan Ramana did not reject the conception of a Personal God any more than Shankaracharya did. Arunachala was God and Guru for him and he gave us the incomparable mystical love poem 'Arunachala-Siva'. In the same way, Shankaracharya gave his Guru Govinda Padacharya as the Personal God for his devotees, and from this worship came the 'Bhaja Govindam'.

Visitor: In the lives of the Western mystics we find descriptions of what is called the mystic way with the three well-marked stages of purgation, illumination and union. The purgatory stage corresponds to what we call the sadhana period. Was there any such period in the life of Sri Bhagavan?

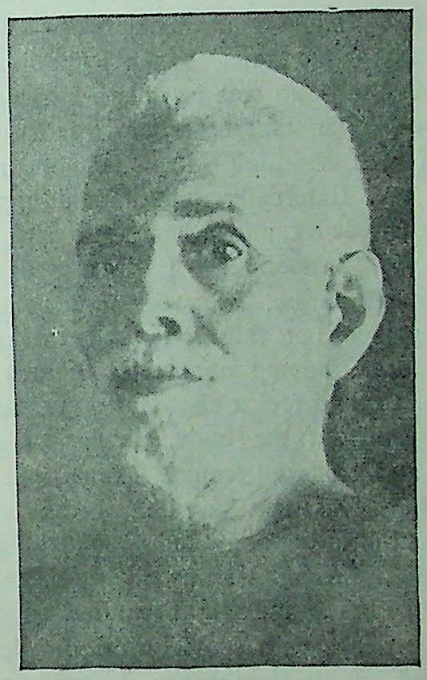
Bhagavan: I know no such period. I never performed any pranayama or japa. I know no mantras. I had no rules of meditation or contemplation. Even when I came to hear of such things later, I was never attracted by them. Even now my mind refuses to pay attention to them. Sadhana implies an object to be gained and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess? In meditation, concentration and contemplation what we have to do is only, not to think of anything but to be still. Then we shall be in our natural state. This natural state is given many names, Moksha, Jnana, Atma, etc. and these give rise to many controversies. There was a time when I used to remain with my eyes closed. That does not mean that I was practising any sadhana then. Even now I sometimes remain with my eyes closed. If people choose to say that I am doing some sadhana at the moment, let them say so. It makes no difference to me. People seem to think that by practising some elaborate Sadhana the Self would one day descend upon them as something very big and with tremendous glory and then they would have what is 'Sakshatkaram'. The Self is *sakshat* all right, but there is no *karam* or *kritam* about it. The word *karam* implies one's doing something. But the Self is realised not by one's doing something, but one's refraining from doing anything, by remaining still and by being simply what one really is.

— From *Ramana Reminiscences.*

DESTINY AND GRACE

By
Major I. T. TANEJA

IT was in 1946 that a friend told me in Bombay about Maharshi Ramana who was considered to be the Lord personified. Something in me was thereafter always reminding me to visit Bhagavan early, but on account of the partition of India and the problems arising from Independence I could not do so. I first came to the Ashram in June 1949 and stayed for two days. I had my own problems which I wanted to lay before Maharshi. But, as I had been told that replies to problems came automatically to your mind when you sat in His presence, I decided not to speak and to remain quiet. Replies to all problems came in one word 'Destiny'. Bhagavan was speaking something in Tamil to the ladies and there were smiles and happy feelings all round. I asked a gentleman sitting next to me what Bhagavan was saying, since I did not know Tamil. He said that it was about 'Destiny'. During my stay this word 'Destiny' came to my ears several times. I purchased two small books from the Ashram bookstall and the first word that I saw in them, to my surprise, was 'Destiny'. I thought that if it was only a question of destiny what was the use of coming here so far. Anyway I liked and remembered the look of Bhagavan which he gave me as I entered the Hall and walked towards Him. During my short stay I tried to sit always in the view of Bhagavan in the Hall and during meals.



On my return I could feel that something had started working within me. But my difficulties and worries increased manyfold. For eight years I was in wilderness. In 1958 one day I was looking casually at the books in a bookstall in Bombay V.T. Suddenly I noticed Bhagavan's name and His photograph on a book written by Mr. Arthur Osborne. A current passed through my body and I immediately purchased the book. Thereafter my life began to be transformed. Bhagavan's active assistance was now noticeable in all matters and samadhi became easy and part of my daily routine. I visited the Ashram in 1959 and 1960 and stayed over a month each time. It now became clear that Sri Arunachala was attracting me like a magnet and I was eager to come to the Ashram again and again.

Once in 1961 I was in samadhi at Bhagavan's shrine during Veda Parayana. The time was about 17.35 hrs. Suddenly I felt that all my limbs were forcibly controlled by a power and I could not even open my eyes. I became helpless although I was conscious and could clearly hear the recitation of Vedas. I felt myself increasing in size. I could clearly

see in me the Hill and sea. Simultaneously the sound 'I', 'I' arose overpowering everything. I was frightened. I could feel that physical heart was beating very fast and the body perspiring. I felt I was going to die. The sound 'I' continued to sound with the same force caring for nobody. I shouted 'Ramana, Ramana' loudly and made every effort to come out of the state. When I finally opened my eyes the Arati was just over. I was expecting the people standing around me to enquire why I was shouting so loudly, but nobody asked me. Externally nothing had happened. Major Chadwick and others were just getting up to go. Immediately I prostrated before Bhagavan's shrine. The world had an entirely different look at that time and I could see the people moving about like figures on a screen. I could feel a continuous current flowing throughout the body, giving me eternal peace and a blissful feeling. The current lasted till 04.00 hrs. next morning. I did not feel like talking to anybody and wanted to go into samadhi again. Since I was leaving the Ashram early the next morning I wanted to discuss my experience with some of the old devotees and find out its significance. I spoke to some but received no satisfactory reply. Then I thought that it must be an experience which old devotees must have had in one form or another and that I had better keep quiet. During my visits in the subsequent years I discovered to my surprise that that was not an ordinary experience. It was something which occurred on account of the special grace of the Lord. I was actually face to face with 'Reality'.

In the year 1967 I was one day sitting at the base of the Hill in a convenient *asan* looking intently at Sri Arunachala. Suddenly I found myself absolutely free of thoughts. I was completely drawn to Sri Arunachala, my body having become absolutely light. This blissful state continued for 45 minutes. I wanted to go down early to the samadhi room for samadhi. But a voice within said : "What is this you are in now?" I realized that I had been magnetised by Sri Arunachala. I prostrated, prayed and wondered saying: "Lord, this state you have shown me without any effort on my part. It is so blissful and is all peace. Then why this trouble of sitting consciously in samadhi? Is it not possible to remain like this always?" The following stanza of Sri Bhagavan came to my mind :

> "I have discovered a New Thing! This Hill, the lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of any one who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with It, and fixes him motionless like Itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What (a wonder) is this? Oh Souls! Beware of It and live! Such a destroyer of lives is this magnificent Arunachala which shines within the Heart."
>
> — *Five Hymns to Arunachala.*

During the India-Pakistan conflict in September 1965 the Lord gave me the privilege of remaining throughout at the front and taking part in various attacks. From the way He handled the situations and the way He saved me there was no doubt left that He saves those who have full Faith in Him.

If chasing one's shadow seems
foolish
What if the shadow is chasing
the Self
Asking "Who am I?"

SHEN HUI

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

By
Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

LORD Krishna gives us this warning in the *Bhagavad Gita* :

"The wind turns a ship
From its course upon the waters :
The wandering winds of the senses
Cast man's mind adrift
And turn his better judgement from its course."

Meditation is a life-long adventure, and no one should take to it in the expectation of attaining Self-Realization within two months or two years. Self-Realization, Nirvana or Samadhi....call the goal by whatever name you like....is deliverance from time into the Eternal Now. Any emphasis on "when, when, when" can serve only one purpose : to trap us in time. Sings the Sufi mystic Jalal-uddin Rumi :

"Past and future veil God from our sight ;
Burn up both of them with fire. How long
Wilt thou be partitioned by these segments, like a reed ?
So long as a reed is partitioned, it is not privy to secrets,
Nor is it vocal in response to lip and breathing."

The goal may be distant, but the change in direction will show itself in increasing health, security, concentration and awareness of the indivisible unity of all life. In order to build our life on Meditation we do not have to go to the Himalayas or the High Sierras. We can begin it here and now in the bosom of our family, in the midst of our community. We can begin it here and now, in the kitchen or at the desk, at the counter or on the campus.

As pointed out by the great spiritual teachers of all religions, the only barrier between us and Reality is *ahamkara*, a precise Sanskrit term which may be roughly translated as the ego, self-will or separateness. For the vast majority of mankind the gradual removal of this barrier can most effectively and least violently be undertaken in the midst of society, in the very bosom of our family. Pines and oaks are beautiful, but they do not cross our will nor force their opinions upon us. It is in the give and take of family life that we can find a continuing context for developing forbearance, forgiveness, compassion and respect for those who differ in outlook. One of my young friends told me after his spiritual sojourn in the Sierras that he had attained Cosmic Consciousness. "Why don't you go home and convey this good news to your parents ?" I asked. When he told me that he could not get on well with them, I had to remind him that Cosmic Consciousness includes one's parents also !

As the householder sage Yagnavalkya explains to his wife Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad :

"It is not for the sake of the husband, my beloved, that the husband is dear, but for the sake of the Self.
It is not for the sake of the wife, my beloved, that the wife is dear, but for the sake of the Self.
It is not for the sake of the children, my beloved, that the children are dear, but for the sake of the Self."

When we forget our own happiness in promoting the happiness of those around us, we are expanding our consciousness to include our parents, partners, children, friends and eventually our enemies. "Treat your husband like a king tonight" runs a local advertisement. "Treat your husband like a king every night" I recommend to every wife who wants to be a queen.

Side by side with this practice of putting the welfare of the other person first must come the discriminating restraint of the senses. This is not a plea for sense negation, but a practical program for taming and training the wild horses of the senses so that we may be their master and not their victim. In our "sensate" civilization we are subjected by the mass media around us to a ceaseless barrage of propaganda persuading us to yield to the clamour of the senses in order to find abiding joy, security and fulfilment. By yielding to the clamour of the senses we are living on the lowest level of consciousness, the physical or animal, where separateness is expressed in its strongest form. The animal does not have the capacity to break out of its separateness because it has no choice but to obey the call of the senses.

To illustrate this from our food habits, there is a Zen proverb that only one-third of what we eat benefits us; the remaining two-thirds benefit the medical profession. In other words, we have to learn to distinguish when we are eating to nourish the body and when we are eating because we are unable to resist the demands of the palate. Most of us, in moments of frustration, have tried to find our fulfilment in hot fudge sundae or lemon meringue pie, little realizing that what we are doing is adding a few more pounds to our body, leaving the frustration intact. Instead of letting the mind play games on us through the palate, we can learn to play games on the mind by asking it to wait an hour for its sundae or pie. That hour can be usefully spent in the repetition of the mantram, and we need not be surprised if by the end of it our mind has flitted on to something else. Thus by skillfully saying "no" to the senses, we have begun to exercise some control over the mind.

The establishment of our complete sovereignty over the mind can be achieved little by little, day by day, step by step. Infinite patience and intelligent practice are required for steady progress in meditation, and there is only one failure in meditation: the failure to meditate regularly. A Hindu proverb says, "Miss one morning's meditation and seven are needed to make it up." Or in the words of St. John of the Cross, "He who interrupts the course of his spiritual exercises and prayer is like a man who allows a bird to escape from his hand; he can hardly catch it again."

The continuity of our meditation can be maintained and fostered by the repetition of the mantram or spiritual formula on all possible occasions, even though it may be for only two minutes at a time. The mantram should be so close to us that we will be able to pick it up even during a short break in our activities. We can make the mantram an integral part of our consciousness by using it on our walks, while waiting for appointments and, of course, while going to sleep.

The conquest of the world within requires as much training, planning and wise guidance as the conquest of outer space. We would not dream of putting a man in orbit ill-equipped, poorly trained and unguided. The sustained practice of meditation takes us through many unchartered areas of the mind where the wise suggestions of a guide, drawing on his own experience, are invaluable. During arid intervals, which occur from time to time on the path of meditation, it is difficult to persevere without the sustained enthusiasm and unfailing support of a guide.

This relationship between the traveller and the guide leads not to dependence, as is sometimes misunderstood, but to utter self-reliance. It may be remembered that Patanjali, the illustrious author of the ancient manual on meditation, calls the goal of meditation by the term *kaivalya* which means total independence in which the body, senses and mind obey the Atman or Inner Ruler. This Inner Ruler is the real Guide, but until we become aware of Him in our own heart, we need the assistance of a temporary guide.

THE MUKTIKA UPANISHAD

By
MADGUNI SHAMBU BHAT

The first chapter of the Muktika Upanishad is of considerable contingent interest since it serves as a sort of introduction to the whole series, and we therefore published it in our issue of January 1968. We were obliged to omit the second chapter, which is of more doctrinal interest, for reasons of space, so we are publishing that here. The reference to the Monkey King is due to the fact that it is supposed to be the teaching of Sri Rama to his servitor and disciple Hanuman (Maruti).

CHAPTER II

THEN Maruti again asked Sri Ramachandra : " What actually is the attainment of That, and what is the purpose and use of it ? "

Sri Ramachandra replied : It is the nature of man's mind to enslave him through its tendency to cause suffering owing to the alternation of pleasure and pain. This is due to the belief that he is the author of his actions and the harvester of their results. Jivanmukti or Liberation while still in the body is the cessation of mental qualities. This is followed by Videhamukti or Liberation without the body on the exhaustion of prarabdha karma. This is like the space inside a jar becoming one with the space outside it when the jar breaks. The 108 Upanishads are evidence and authority for the occurrence of Jivanmukti and Videhamukti.

The purpose of it is the attainment of everlasting bliss through elimination of the thought that one is the author of one's actions. This can be achieved by human effort. Just as one obtains a son by the putrakameshti sacrifice and wealth by commerce and heaven by the jyotishtoma sacrifice,[1] so one can attain Liberation through union with the Infinite brought about by right understanding ; and this can be done by personal effort. It is to be achieved by the abolition of all vasanas.[2] The following stanzas explain this.

1

Human activity is of two kinds, individualistic and scriptural : the former leads to unhappiness and the latter to divine happiness.

2

As long as attachment to the world (social contacts), to scriptural study and to the body persists true enlightenment does not appear.

3

The vasanas in a man are of two kinds, beneficent and harmful.[3] If you are influenced by the former

4

You will gradually and even rapidly attain My station. On the other hand, if you are cast into trouble by the harmful vasanas

5

That is due to your own past karma and therefore the tendency must be overcome by your own effort. The stream of vasanas flowing through good and bad channels

---

[1] This refers to the formal heavens which, unlike Liberation, can be attained by prescribed courses of religious activity.

[2] That is to say that if the obstructions to Liberation are removed Liberation is there.

[3] There are good and bad tendencies. First the bad tendencies have to be turned in the right direction as they impede Liberation while the good ones hasten it ; but ultimately all tendencies, good and bad alike, have to be stilled and only pure abidance remains. See, for instance, verses 31 and 70.

6

Should be directed by human effort into only the good and auspicious channel ; what has entered the inauspicious channel should be redirected into the other.

7

Vasanas that are redirected from the harmful to the beneficent channel become beneficent and vice versa. Thus by your own effort you should nourish and educate your mind, like a child.

8

When your vasanas begin to be habitually controlled in this way, then indeed the results of your practice should appear, Oh Slayer of the Enemy.

9

Even when in doubt, act always in the beneficent direction, O Son of Maruta. If the balance swings too much to that side there is no harm in that.

10

Destruction of vasanas, true understanding and elimination of the mind practised *simultaneously* bring good results, Oh wise one.

11

Unless they are practised repeatedly and together the final goal of Bliss cannot be attained even in a hundred years.

12

Even if practised well and for a long time but separately they do not produce the final result, just as mantras said out loud do not.

13

By practising them together and for a long time all the shackles of the heart get broken, however strong, just as do the fibres in a lotus stem when it is cut.

14

Worldly attachments, though unfounde are strong through having been nourish during a number of births. Therefore th cannot be destroyed without sufficient lo practice.

15

Therefore give up beforehand all desi for enjoyment and practise only these thr methods with discretion and manly effort.

16

The wise regard a mind yoked to vas nas as bound. It is when relieved of the that it is said to be Liberated, Oh Monk Lord. Hasten, then, to rid the mind of i vasanas.

17

Vasanas are eradicated by deep thoug and upright conduct. Then the mind becom steady like a clear lamp.

18

He who remains constant, renouncing vasanas and abiding in Me, is one wi Me who am pure Consciousness ; he is perfe Bliss.

19

One who has eradicated all desires fro his heart is Liberated whether he remai in samadhi or not and whether he perform actions or not.

20

He whose mind is free from vasana has no loss from inactivity nor gain fro activity, not even from ritual or the chantin of mantras.

21

There is no higher state than Silence utter free from vasanas.

22

The eyes and other senses by themselv are in fact free from vasanas, but the

run after outer objects, and it is the vasanas that cause them to do so.

23

Just as the eye falls without attachment on things that come involuntarily within its range, so does a valiant person behold things and actions.

24

The silent Sages know the vasanas of personal desire and those arising out of natural forces and how to still them.

25

The mind, being stimulated and thrown into activity by desires which move it strongly, becomes the cause of old age and death.

26

It is the vasanas that provoke the movements of the life-breath, and these in turn provoke vasanas. Thus the seed in the mind is produced and again produces as happens with plants.

27

The mind has thus two seeds, breathing and vasanas. When one of them ceases the other does also.

28

The mind is to be stilled by performing activities without attachment, by not ascribing reality to worldly affairs and by appreciating the perishability of one's body. This prevents vasanas from arising, and the prevention of vasanas annuls the mind.

29

When the mind gives up thought, due to prolonged freedom from vasanas, there ensues mindlessness [4] which brings perfect peace.

30

Oh Maruta, you should practise the methods prescribed by your guru and by the scriptures until you have attained this state, overcoming the imperfection of your mind.

31

Then, when your objective has been attained, your purified mind should give up these practices, though they are good in themselves, as it previously gave up the stream of vasanas.

32

The state of mindlessness is of two kinds, one with physical form as a Jivanmukta, and the other without form when the body also disappears.

33

Now listen carefully to what I say about the sacred state of mindlessness.

34

When you attain this state you certainly enjoy complete peace and benevolence. That is the state of a Jivanmukta and is free from all possibility of rebirth.

35

This is the mindlessness of Jivanmukta and is called *sarupa* (with form). The *arupa* (formless) kind arises after the body falls away.

36-37

The mind is the root of the world-tree with its thousands of buds, branches, fruits and leaves. Intentions [5] constitute the mind and the mind constitutes the intentions and is the root of the world-tree.

38

So wither the mind quickly in order that the world-tree also may wither. The only way to do this is to control one's own mind.

---

[4] Mindlessness does not imply the darkness of inanimate objects but the Light of pure Consciousness.

[5] The Sanskrit word is *sankalpa.*

39

The rise of the mind is man's fall, and the fall of the mind is man's rise. The mind of the wise succumbs, for the mind is a fetter to the wise.

40

Until the mind is mastered by the practice of Oneness the vasanas dance about in the heart like night-time devils.

41

Only when the vanity of the mind has gone and the senses, which are the enemy, are mastered, does the inclination to enjoyment wither like a lotus in winter.

42

The first thing is to conquer your own mind, clenching your fists, gritting your teeth and tensing your limbs for the battle.

43

The mind cannot be conquered by sitting alone and thinking endlessly about it, but only by practising the one perfect, well-established method.

44

Just as an inebriated savage elephant cannot be mastered without use of the goad, so the mind cannot without recourse to Vedantic studies.

45

There are indeed potent methods for subjugating the mind, such as renunciation of desires and control of the breath.

46

In spite of these methods, those who seek to control themselves by force are using a magic ointment to hunt in the darkness instead of making a light.

47

The foolish attempt to conquer the mind by force (through hathayoga) is like trying to bind the inebriated chief of elephants wi the fibres of a lotus stem.

48

There are two seeds of the mind-tr which bears the whole multitude of activities one is the act of breathing and the oth powerful inclinations.

49

The latter is in fact all-pervading ener which is activated by the process of breathin Therefore concentration of mind is said t lead to enlightenment.

50

The way to this is by meditating instructed. Even without complete success concentration, the practice can be du developed and leads towards success, meditate only on enlightenment, which Bliss-Consciousness.

51

The pause made by yogis between t completion of out-breathing and the co mencement of in-breathing is known kumbhaka.

52

When the in-breathing of air from o side is completed and the outbreathing has yet begun there is the pause of equalised pressure known as outer kumbhaka.

53

The flow of mental activity in the st of Oneness free from I-sense is samprajn samadhi. This samadhi is awakened by t practice of meditation.

54

When it becomes involuntary and t mind has grown steady it confers the utm happiness. This involuntary samadhi is de to yogis.

55

It is much prized by silent Sages, it is free from mind and intellect but immers

in pure Consciousness, from which it never departs.

56

Complete in its beginning, complete in its end and complete in the middle, this samadhi is highly to be valued, bringing Oneness with Universal Being.

57

Acceptance of something (as real or desirable) without due consideration is called a vasana.

58

A man becomes one with whatever powerfully occupies his mind, Oh best of Monkeys. He becomes that to the exclusion of other vasanas.

59

When overcome by vasanas he becomes one with them. He considers his desire all in all and therefore perfect.

60

The Essence does not in fact change its state on account of man's varying vasanas, but one who regards it from the wrong viewpoint sees it as changing, like a drunken man.

61

There are said to be two kinds of vasanas, the pure and impure ; the latter cause rebirth while the former avert it.

62

The wise say that impure vasanas, which are strongly united with ignorance and vanity, bring about rebirth. What is desirable is that the vasanas, the seed of rebirth, should be free from impurities like a burnt seed (which cannot sprout).

63

Oh Maruti, what is the use of chewing over the already chewed and ragged stories of the scriptures ? Better to turn one's energy to search for the Light within.

64

Oh, Lion among Monkeys, one who gives up seeing and not-seeing alike and sits quietly withdrawn is indeed Brahman and the knower of Brahman.[6]

65

Even repeated study of the four Vedas and the Scriptures does not enable a man to understand the Principle of Brahman, just as a ladle does not know the taste of the soup.

66

What further incentive to renunciation can be prescribed for the man who is not disgusted with the unwholesome smell of his own body ?

67

The body is extremely impure, the Atman in it extremely pure. Once we grasp the difference between the two we know what needs to be purified.

68

Bondage means bondage to vasanas and Liberation the destruction of vasanas, so give up all vasanas, even the desire for Liberation.

69

First give up inner cravings for gratifying the senses and then develop pure vasanas such as friendship.

70

Then give up even these good vasanas, although manifesting them outwardly towards the world, and abide in pure Consciousness with inner peace and with equal friendliness towards all.

71

Giving up even that which operates the mind and the intellect, Oh Maruti, abide firmly

[6] This refers to the Upanishadic saying that the knower of Brahman is equivalent to Brahman Himself.

in Me [7], with the powerful well-being that remains.

72

Oh, Son of Pavana (the Wind-god), abide permanently in Me that am formless and inexhaustible, without sound or taste or touch or odour, without name and without category, in Me the reliever of misery.

73

I am OM, the fully Liberated, the One without a second, which appears to the eyes (in the form of the world) as the lofty expanse of the sky, which shines forth uniformly, which is the unborn and indestructible, unattached and omnipresent.

74

I am indeed the Seer ; I am the Pure and the Unchangeable ; I have neither qualities nor purposes ; I am before and behind, above and below ; I am everywhere, Infinite, the Greatest : thus should you think.[7]

75

You should feel : I am the unborn and the deathless, the ageless and immortal, self-luminous, omnipresent, inexhaustible ; I am neither the cause nor the action ; I am unaffected and ever content.

76

When time takes away the body, the Liberated gives up the state of jivanmukti and enters that of Videhamukti just as the wind that stops blowing becomes still air.

As the Rik stotra declares : That is the Supreme State of All-pervading Vishnu which the Sages always see, like seeing the heavens with open eyes. It is that with which the Liberated and fully Awakened unite. That indeed is the supreme state of Vishnu. This is true ; thus says the Upanishad.

Invocation

OM. That is full ; this is full. This fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.

OM. Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

---

[7] Refers to Sri Rama who is regarded as Brahman.

In the age when Life on earth was full, no one paid any special attention to worthy men nor did they single out the man of ability. Rulers were simply the highest branches on the tree, and the people were like deer in the woods. They were honest and righteous without realizing that they were "doing their duty". They loved each other and did not know that this was "Love of Neighbour". They deceived no one yet they did not know that they were "men to be trusted". They were reliable and did not know that this was "Good Faith". They lived freely together giving and taking, and did not know that they were "generous". For this reason their deeds have not been narrated. They made no history.

— From *The Way of Chuang Tzu*
(Translated by Father Thomas Merton)

OF WHAT RELIGION WAS SAI BABA?

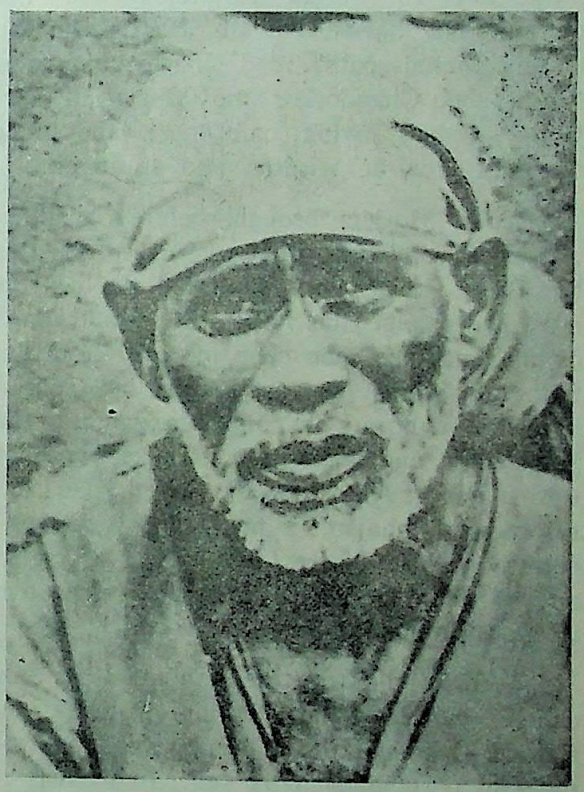
By
P. S. V. IYER

Apart from being the Secretary of the Calcutta Sai Samaj, and editing its monthly bulletin, Sri P. S. V. Iyer also participates actively in Ramana Jayanti celebrations in Calcutta. He has also helped in bringing out a Bengali publication called *Sree Ramana Geetika* containing the life and some of the works of the Maharshi.

SAI BABA gave no indication of his belonging to any particular religion, but he was intensely religious. He showed no preference to any community, yet he favoured religious practices. He tended the holy fire after the Hindu and the Zorastrian. He passed for a Moslem in his dress and his ways and he reverenced Dutta and Sri Ram. He spoke of Allah Malik with the fervour of a devout Moslem, and he ordered the observance of the holy Guru Purnima.

Sai Baba came in 1838, as a youth to Shirdi, a barren and neglected village in Rahate subdivision of Maharashtra. He chose this uninteresting spot to carry on his experiments in communal harmony. Hindu and Moslem families lived then, as they do now, as neighbours in that village. They were often quarrelling with each other.

As a stranger Baba treated the sick among them with herbs, and then he shared in their labours. Apart from the services he rendered to them, Sai Baba could, by his stature and the spiritual powers he had gained from the grace of his guru Venkusa, and stored by dint of his penance and sacrifices, arrest their attention and compel their admiration. By his very presence, therefore, he was able to get these simple rustics to understand the fruitlessness of dissension. They had to walk miles to bathe or fetch fresh water from the Godhavari. He excavated for them a fresh water well in the village and laid out a garden by getting the villagers work shoulder to



Sri Sai Baba

shoulder. He showed them how by working intelligently and together they could make Shirdi a better place to live in.

In the village Sai Baba occupied a Mosque, which he called Dwaraka Maayi. In this mosque he lighted a fire with three logs, which is burning to this day. The ashes of this fire are found to work miraculously in curing diseases. It is in this mosque that Sai Baba blessed those who came to him, granting them

all kinds of benefits, temporal and spiritual. Here he spoke words of wisdom which Narasimha Swamiji has compiled in his masterpiece "Charters and Sayings of Sai Baba". Sharing his favours in common these devotees who belonged to different communities looked upon each other as brothers in faith.

Sai Baba delighted in singing songs of Kabir Das, who had his digs at the Hindu and Moslem fanatics. Baba showed amazing proficiency in Hindu scriptures and the Quran. He bade Abdullah Bhai recite the Quran, Mahalsapathy read Bhagavatham and Nana Saheb Chandorkar study Bhagavad Gita. Under Baba's loving care these and other devotees grew in wisdom and spirituality.

Once a Moslem brought before Sai Baba a convert, and felt proud of his work. But Sai Baba rejected it. He asked the convert if he had changed his father. He would never countenance any man changing over from the faith into which his past Karma had caused him to be born. Sai Baba recognized the justification and necessity for the existence of the major religions in the world. He did recommend bhajan, a meditation and self-enquiry to his devotees, but he was averse to any of these interfering with their respective religious injunctions.

Sai Baba allowed the holding of a fair called *urs* in Shirdi during Ramanavami festival. Moslem traders were given opportunities to participate in the fair. In the wrestling matches held in this festival Hindu, Moslem and Sikh combatants, as well as those belonging to any other community are allowed. The victor, to whichever community he may belong, carries away the prize. In the Ramanavami procession the Hindus carry banners and the Moslems take out salvers containing sandal paste. These practices go on even now in Shirdi. Thus, by bringing members of sister communities in commerce, sports and colourful festivities, Baba achieved wonderful communal harmony.

When Sai Baba attained Mahasamadhi on 15th October, 1918, dispute arose between Hindus and Moslems in Shirdi over the manner of disposing of his remains. A plebiscite was held 36 hours after, in the presence of an official who deputized for the District Collector, and it was decided by majority that his remains should be interred inside a temple which Gopal Rao Butty had built for worshipping Krishna. To this building the body was carried in a procession and laid to rest in a sepulchre constructed for the purpose. The body had remained fresh, without decomposition or rigor mortis all these hours. The temple housing the remains of Sai Baba is called Samadhi Mandir. In this place one feels the living presence of the Master. Here Baba's devotees gather in their multitudes, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality to attend the services arranged day and night.

It is a touching sight to see the devotees belonging to different communities join in chanting the Mahrathi hymns at the arati (closing part of the service) which is held twice daily, once at noon and again in the last hour of night. One may observe, on this occasion, how devotion to Sai Baba brings heart to heart people of diverse faiths the world over.

The owl calls, I hear,
The owl's "I" is it's calling.
My "me" is my hearing.
What is that which is both
calling and hearing?

SHEN HUI

YOGA VASISHTA SARA

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

In the January 1968 issue of *The Mountain Path* we published an article on Yoga Vasishta and promised to serialise a condensed version of it at a future date. We publish below the first chapter of one of the condensed versions known as the Yoga Vasishta Sara (The Essence of Yoga Vasishta). The remaining chapters will be published in the subsequent issues. The translation was made by SWAMI SURESANANDA of Vijnana Ramaneeyam, Palghat, but has been considerably modified.

CHAPTER I

DISPASSION

1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

2. Neither one who is totally ignorant nor one who knows it (Truth) is eligible to study this book. Only he who thinks 'I am bound; I must become free' is entitled to study it.

3. Until one is definitely blessed by the Supreme Lord he will not find either a proper Guru or the right scripture.

4. Just as a steady boat, O Rama, is obtained from a boatman, so also the method of crossing the ocean of *samsara* is learnt by associating with great souls.

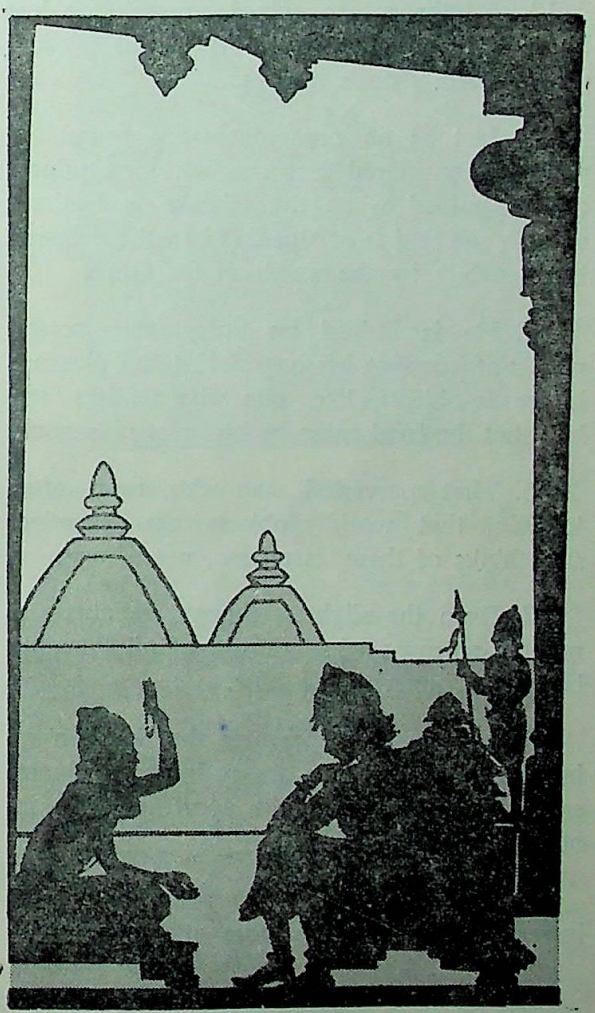
5. The great remedy for the long-lasting disease of *samsara* is the enquiry, 'Who am I?, to whom does this samsara belong?', which entirely cures it.

6. Not a day should be spent in a place which does not possess the tree of a wise knower of Truth with its good fruits and cool shade.

7. The sages are to be approached even if they do not teach. Even their talks in a light vein contain wisdom.

8. The company of sages converts emptiness into fullness, death into immortality and adversity into prosperity.

9. If sages were concerned solely with their own happiness with whom could those tormented by the sorrows of *samsara* seek refuge?



10. That which is imparted, O good soul, to a worthy disciple who has become dispassionate is the real wisdom; it is the real

purport of the sacred texts and is also the comprehensive wisdom.

11. Following the customary method of teaching is only for preserving the tradition. Pure awareness results solely from the clarity of the disciple's understanding.

12. The Lord cannot be seen with the help of the sacred texts or the Guru. The Self is seen by the Self alone with the pure intellect.

13. All the arts acquired by men are lost by lack of practice, but this art of wisdom grows steadily once it rises.

14. Just as an ornament worn round the neck is considered lost through forgetfulness and is gained when the mistake is realized, so also the Self is attained (when the delusion is removed) by the words of the Guru.

15. He is indeed an unfortunate person who, not knowing his own Self, takes pleasure in sense-objects, like one who realizes too late that the food eaten by him was poisonous.

16. That perverted man who, even after knowing that worldly objects are deceptive, still thinks of them, is an ass, not a man.

17. Even the slightest thought immerses a man in sorrow; when devoid of all thoughts he enjoys imperishable bliss.

18. Just as we experience the delusion of hundreds of years in a dream lasting an hour, so also we experience the sport of *maya* in our waking state.

19. He is a happy man whose mind is inwardly cool and free from attachment and hatred and who looks upon this (world) like a mere spectator.

20. He who has understood well how to abandon all ideas of acceptance and rejection and who has realized the consciousness which is within the innermost heart — his life is illustrious.

21. On the dissolution of the body the ether (consciousness) limited by the heart (*hrdayam*) alone ceases to exist. People lament needlessly that the Self is extinct.

22. When pots, etc. are broken the space within them becomes unlimited. So also when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

23. *Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is Brahman alone appearing illusorily in the form of the world.*

24. The Self is more extensive than space; it is pure, subtle, undecaying and auspicious. As such how could it be born and how can it die?

25. All this is the tranquil One without beginning, middle or end which cannot be said to be existent or non-existent. Know this and be happy.

26. O Rama, it is indeed nobler to wander begging about the streets of the outcasts (*chandalas*), an earthen bowl in hand, than to live a life steeped in ignorance.

27. Neither disease nor poison nor adversity nor any other thing in the world causes more suffering to men than such stupidity engendered in their bodies.

— To be continued in the next issue.

Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self; because That is here and now. If it were not so, but attainable by some effort at some time, and if it were new and had to be acquired, it would not be worth pursuit. Because, what is not natural is not permanent either.

— SRI MAHARSHI.

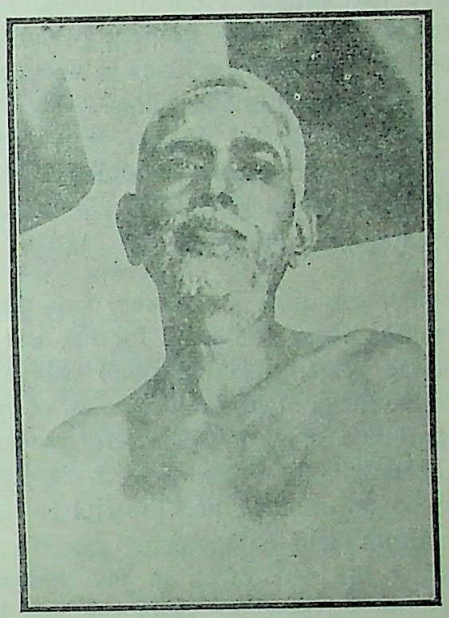
GRACE FROM A DISTANCE

By
ELIZABETH LOK

WHEN did I first hear of Bhagavan? It is difficult to imagine a time when one had not. Yet I think it was from Brunton's book *Message From Arunachala* (first read in the late 40's), and many good talks with a friend of Brunton's. Then in 1950 there was the article in an American magazine describing Bhagavan's last days.

These sources gave no more than an elusive awareness of something I wanted avidly to learn more about. A pilgrimage to Arunachala became — and remains — an unfaltering and deep desire. Imagine my feelings around ten years later when my beloved sister De Lancey Kapleau was able to do just that! And was good enough to write fully about it and send me Osborne's book on Bhagavan's life!

I read through her description of her stay at the ashram with mounting excitement; read and reread it. Then devoured the book. The last chapters were read late at night, when the children and my husband were all asleep, and my heart nearly burst for joy, while grateful tears sprang from my eyes. When I closed the book I sat still for some time, then quite spontaneously prostrated myself in gratitude. Later, in bed, thinking of my sister's letter, I felt an earthy pang of envy that she, not I, had reached the ashram. You know the sort of thing: "Oh how wonderful — just imagine — I wish it had been I". The jealousy surprised me, a little, but when I recognized and acknowledged it I had to laugh at the jealous one, and said to myself: "But you fool, if your sister went there of course this was part of her karmic pattern. For you, and for anybody, if Arunachala exists anywhere it must exist most truly



in the hearts of those who are open to it. So the significance is always within oneself."

At this the field of my vision was lit by a great glow of golden light, and my heart expanded in almost unbelievable joy. The joy deepened and glowed into an incredible depth of peace, which wells up again as I write this.

A few weeks afterward I was thinking still of Osborne's book, and particularly recalling the beautiful experience of the disciple who felt the pressure of Bhagavan's hand on his heart, in blessing, while far from the ashram and Bhagavan. Again a swift little pang of envy, and again a self-scolding: he to whom it happened had made himself ready for the reception of such Grace, and it could happen only to the heart which was ripe for it.

The darkness of the night around me became utterly black, and in my mind's eye I caught a fleeting glimpse of Maharshi's

wonderful face. At the same moment I felt a sharp pressure in the chest, just to the right of the breastbone. Everything merged into unutterable peace. I was able to dwell in that peace for several days, during which time errors, disharmonies, misunderstandings, impatience and fatigue became impossible, and my family, who knew nothing of what had happened, responded radiantly in an unbroken harmonious and loving glow. The peace gradually receded, of course, but from that time, conscious effort is opening my heart to Bhagavan and I could almost always restore it.

Around this time my mother was taken to a hospital, where she lived for her last three remaining years. Having small children, no household help, and the vagaries of public transportation made it difficult for me to visit her regularly. I have always been deeply fond of this loving mother, and grateful to her for her warmth and enthusiasm. As her body weakened she was much in my thoughts. I was concerned that for years she had feared death, and while my grasp of spiritual things was tentative, I felt that somehow perhaps one might help. So often at nights or in quiet moments I would think of her, wishing her, willing her peace and love and courage with all the strength of my heart. And while I didn't speak of it, I found that she felt and responded to this. In sending love to her this way the ordinary small surface rumplings of disagreement and awareness of each others' small failings completely disappeared, and we felt ourselves very closely united by love in a very real and freeing sense.

One afternoon on a hospital visit my mother, who had been rather ill, drifted in and out of sleep while I was with her. I sat very close by, cradling her head in my arms, and while she drifted off, wishing her love and peace with all my heart. I nearly trembled with the intensity of effort. At one point she opened her eyes. As I looked at her it was not my mother's hazel eyes into which mine looked, but Bhagavan's deep brown ones. And from them flooded peace and love without measure, unfathomable wisdom and bliss, until everything disappeared into a vastness of love and peace. There was no mother, no daughter, no hospital room — only that profound peace which passeth all understanding.

Slowly — I don't know when — it receded. But at that time I knew that my mother was soon to die, and would pass in peace. And I believed that it would be granted to me to be with her at the end. It took place within a week, and I was by the bedside watching a frail body struggle its last, while strongly aware that its soul watched with me, wondering but unafraid. How deep was my gratitude!

It has not been my privilege to have known Bhagavan while he was among us as a man, nor as yet to visit the ashram or to walk on Arunachala. But Bhagavan, the ashram and Arunachala are eternally ready to fill me whenever I truly turn my heart and open it to them.

Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude. To engage in your duty is the true *Namaskar*... and abiding in God is the only true *Asan*.

— BHAGAVAN.

JUST BE

By
G. N. Daley

Bhagavan has said, "First find out who you are then all these things will be known to you."

How can I find the Self?

The Self which many seek is a hypothetical, theoretical non-entity and is thus non-existent. It is merely a concept erroneously sought by those who believe that if they can become that which does not exist, then when identity with the non-existent has been established all other troubles will vanish in the non-existence of this false identity. You cannot identify the Self with anything which either is or is not and still *be* the Self. So why try?

But there must be some point in seeking the Self?

Ah yes, there would be if there were anything to seek, but there is not. If you have no desire for anything and withdraw from your mind any desire either to have or not to have a thing, feeling or thought then you are quite unaffected whether you have any thing or no thing. In reality there *is* nothing.

But what has this got to do with the Self?

Nothing, I am only talking about something which is not you so that you will not go looking for that which you are not.

Then can I find the Self?

No, you can't, that's the point. When you get rid of all your desires and attachments to all these things together with their functions then what is left is the Self. It cannot be sought because it is the seeker looking everywhere for itself instead of just being the self. Isn't it rather foolish to think that you are what you are not, and to look for yourself among those things which are not the Self?

Yes, I suppose so, but how can one become the Self?

You can't and you don't.

But if I do not desire, and do not identify myself with these things then I am being the Self?

Certainly not. You are getting warm, but you are only being not-desiring and not-identifying in relation to those things.

Then what shall I do? It seems quite hopeless.

It isn't, really it is quite simple. When the functions of the mind cease to either desire or not to desire, or identify or not identify, and this is followed by the falling away of the functions themselves then the *Self* alone *Is,* and this is just Being . . . *BE THAT.*

Bhagavan puts this much more clearly than I can, "Is there anyone who does not know the Self? Each knows yet does not know the Self. A strange paradox."

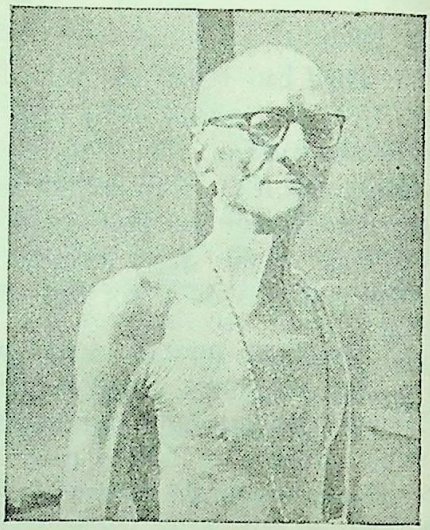
TEARS OF ECSTASY

By
RAMANAPĀDĀNANDA[1]

I WAS a broker whose business took me all over India. Once, when I was in Kashmir, I came to hear of Sri Bhagavan and his greatness. So, soon after my return to Madras, I came to Tiruvannamalai and proceeded to the Ashram. When I saw Sri Bhagavan he was sitting on a bench inside a long room thatched with coconut leaves put up over his mother's tomb. This was in January 1928 when the Ashram consisted practically of this and nothing else. The moment I saw Sri Bhagavan I was overcome by an inexplicable feeling of joy and devotion. I burst into tears immediately and could not stop them for a long time. I had had a chequered career and had never known peace of mind. But in Sri Bhagavan's presence I experienced complete peace of mind. I also experienced extraordinary bliss. The next day I was fortunate enough to have darshan of Sri Seshadriswami.

Although I had to return to Madras my heart was with Sri Bhagavan. So I came back again in 1930 and was blessed by Sri Bhagavan with a smile and a piercing look. This time also I was overcome by an uncontrollable flow of tears of joy. The same thing happened when I visited the house at Tiruchuzhi in which Sri Bhagavan was born. The moment I entered the house I could not resist my ecstasy and tears, to the surprise of everybody there. None of them had the least idea of Sri Bhagavan's greatness. They had been thinking that Venkataraman had merely become a sannyasin and gone to Tiruvannamalai like other sannyasins and sadhus. When I explained his greatness to them they were all greatly impressed.

On all my subsequent visits to Sri Bhagavan I experienced the same bliss and flow of tears. Sri Bhagavan himself noticed this. Once a tender calf came running and prancing to



Sri Ramanapādānanda

Sri Bhagavan where he sat grinding blackgram for '*vadai*'. Seeing this Polur Srinivasa Ayyar who was nearby remarked: "This calf dances about like Padananda". Upon this Sri Bhagavan said: "Who can shed copious tears of joy like him at the very mention of Bhagavan's name?" Sri Bhagavan also used to greet me very often with the words: "I never feel that you are away from the Ashram. I always feel that you are here."

In 1930 I proceeded north on a sudden impulse. I went to Varanasi, Haridwar, Rishikesh and Badarinath. At Badarinath I met Sri Swami Tapovanji who was impressed by my devotion to Sri Bhagavan so much so that he composed a sloka in Sanskrit in which he invoked "Sri Bhagavan's blessings on Ramanapadananda who sheds copious tears at the very mention of his name." Although I was made very comfortable at Badarinath by the Swamiji and the head priest of the temple and was even granted a piece of land

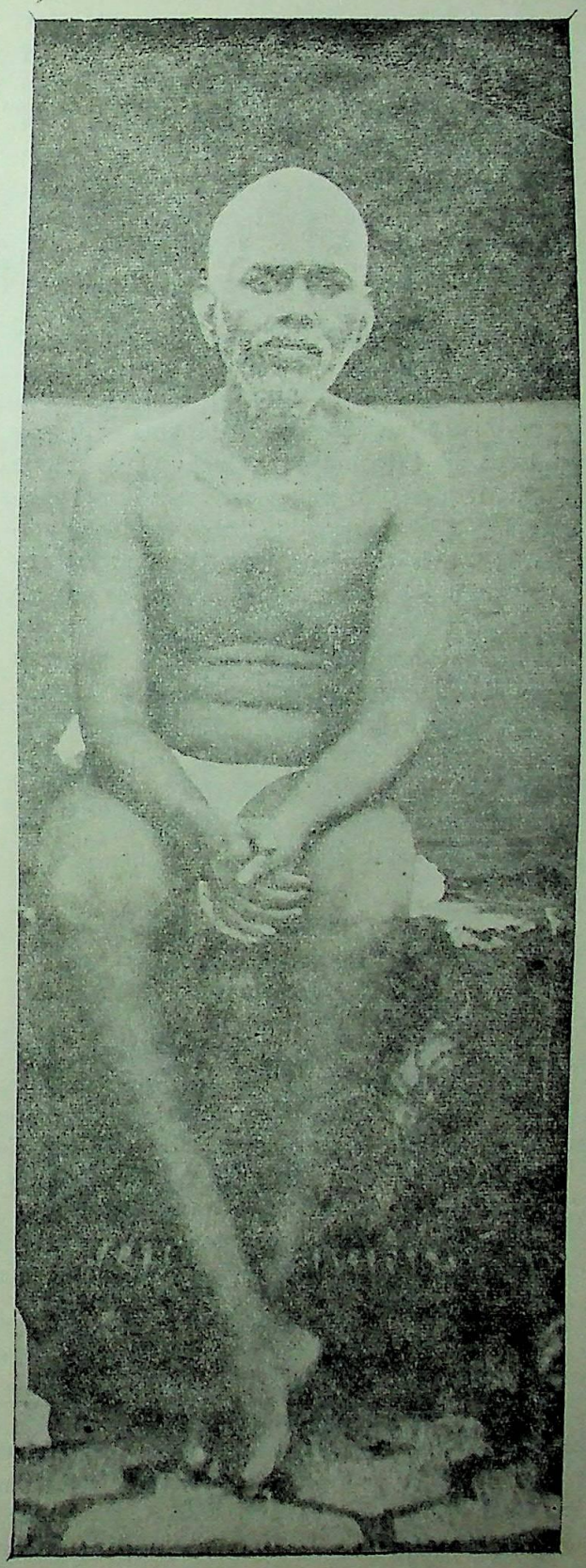
[1] Introduced to our readers in the issue of October 1968, p. 311.

at Bhrigu Dara, I could not stay there. So I returned to Tiruvannamalai. At Varanasi I had been advised to wear ochre robes, the recognized dress of sannyasins, as a means of obtaining alms easily. I had continued to wear them, but, when I came before Bhagavan in them, he burst out laughing and said : " Giving up the ego is the real sannyasa, not the wearing of ochre robes." At once I discarded them and have since then worn only white.

Having been convinced that Sri Bhagavan was the substratum of the universe and the most glorious avatar that has been witnessed till now, I felt that it was my duty to make his greatness known everywhere. With this object in view I resigned my post of a broker in the well-known firm of Bombay Co. at Madurai, much against the wishes of Sri B. V. Narasimha Swami and others. I next proceeded to celebrate Ramana Jayanti (Bhagavan's birthday) at various places with puja, music, discourses, processions, etc. I even proceeded to Ceylon, Burma and Malaya and celebrated Ramana Jayanti or Ramana Mela or installed Ramana's portraits at all the places I visited.

There were several instances in which Sri Bhagavan's grace was particularly bestowed upon me. Once I met Sri Bhagavan on his way up the hill and prostrated myself before him and said : " I have now had Sri Bhagavan's darshan, I can go." Upon this Sri Bhagavan smiled and said : " Whose darshan to whom ? Why don't you say that I had your darshan ? " This has been recorded in " *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* " also.

On another occasion I was trying to meditate in a small Siva temple at Gokarnam. I was feeling frustrated because I could not continue to make the enquiry ' Who am I ? ' successfully. Suddenly I felt that my body had become exactly like that of Sri Bhagavan as it appears in the tri-colour photograph in the book *Self Realization* (old edition). I fell into a trance and did not know how long I remained in that state. When I regained consciousness I wrote to Sri Bhagavan quoting a well-known song of Ramalinga Swamigal beginning with the



words, "I cannot endure my torments any longer". But, without waiting for a reply, I left for Tiruvannamalai where I arrived two days before Mahasivaratri. When Sri Bhagavan asked me why I had come away from Gokarnam when thousands of people were going there on the sacred occasion I replied that Sri Bhagavan was my Lord Siva and that I had, therefore, come for this darshan.

I used very often to bring with me some superior honey when I came to the Ashram. On such occasions Sri Bhagavan used to remark: "I have just been thinking of honey and you are bringing it!" Once, when I came from Madurai, Sri Bhagavan asked me whether I had brought '*sellu*', a special preparation which is offered to the deity at Alagarkovil and then distributed as prasadam to devotees. I immediately rushed back to Madurai without informing anybody and came back quickly with a large quantity of '*sellu*'. When some of it was served on Sri Bhagavan's leaf-plate next time he said to me: "I asked you only in a casual way whether you had brought any and now you have gone all the way to Madurai and got it."

On another occasion my brother-in-law sent, at my instance, from Tiruchendur a dealwood box of sugar candy made of palmyra juice which I thought was good for Sri Bhagavan's asthma. When Sri Bhagavan saw it he observed: "I just thought of this kind of sugar candy and here you have already got it for me." I used to obtain jack fruits from Panruti and mangoes from Salem and Sri Bhagavan used to see that they were properly cut and distributed.

I had obtained for Sri Bhagavan's use an easy chair specially made with a foot rest by Curzon & Co., the well-known furniture makers of Madras. It is now used on the day of the Deepam [1] for placing Sri Bhagavan's portrait. But, when I got his sofa repaired without his knowledge, he refused to sit on it for a long time. It was only when he saw my extreme distress that he relented and agreed to sit on it.

It is Sri Bhagavan's grace which has finally brought me to the Ashram to spend my last days near him. Salutation to Sri Bhagavan!

[1] See the *Ashram Bulletin* of this issue for details on Deepam.

As one enquires for whom is this realization one's individuality goes and the delusion that the Self has yet to be realized leaves him. This alone is the Grace of the Guru. The Guru can only dispel the delusion that the Self has not yet been realized. But to grant Self-realization is impossible not only for the Guru but even for Iswara (God). To pray for the grant of Self-realization is like asking 'give myself to me'! Because of identification with the body there arises the delusion that I am an individual. That creates the further delusion that Guru is an individual other than myself. Really Guru is not other than the Self.

— From *Ramana Reminiscences.*

THE VEDAPARAYANA

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

(Continued from our last issue. This second part of the Upanishad is entitled Ananda Valli or the Section dealing with bliss the previous part being the Siksha Valli or the Section dealing with the Science of Phonetics.)

May (Brahman) protect both of us (the Guru and the disciple). May (Brahman) sustain us. May we work together intensely. May our study be illuminating. Let us not bear ill will towards each other. OM Peace, Peace, Peace.

He who knows Brahman attains the Supreme (state). This has been stated clearly by the following saying: "Brahman is Being, Consciousness and Infinite. He who knows (realizes) that it exists within the cave (heart or intellect), in the highest ether (the Unmanifest), enjoys all his desires along with the omniscient Brahman.

From that (Brahman) or from this Self (Atman) ether (*akasa*) came into existence; from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water the earth, from the earth herbs, from herbs food and from food man. He is indeed this man consisting of the essence of food (*annarasamaya*). This indeed is his head. This is his right wing (side). This is his left wing. This is his trunk. This is the tail (the nether limbs) forming his support. There is also this stanza (explaining it):

"From food are born all beings, those that depend upon the earth. They live on food and into food they enter when they die. Hence it is regarded as the universal (the most important) medicament (*aushadha*). Those who meditate on food as Brahman truly obtain all the food. For food is the first among created things. Hence it is called the universal medicament. All beings are born of food. Having been born they grow on food. It (food) eats, and is eaten by, beings. Therefore it is called *Annam*."

Different from this (body) consisting of the essence of food (*annarasamaya*) is the body consisting of the life forces (*pranamaya*). By this that (*annarasamaya*) is filled. This (*pranamaya*) is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other (*annarasamaya*). *Prana* is indeed his head. *Vyana* is his right wing. *Apana* is his left wing. *Akasa* (ether) is his trunk. *Prithvi* (earth) is the tail which supports him. There is also the following stanza about it :

" The Devas breathe (live) because of *Prana ;* also men and animals. *Prana* is truly the life-span (*ayuh*) of beings. Therefore it is spoken of as the universal life-span. Those who meditate on *Prana* as Brahman attain (live) the full span of life. *Prana* is the life-span of beings and is therefore called the universal life-span (*sarvayusham*). This *pranamaya*) is truly the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (*annarasamaya*). Different from this *pranamaya* is another body consisting of the mind (*manomaya*). By this that (*pranamaya*) is filled. This is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. *Yajus* is his head. *Rk* is his right wing. *Saman* is his left wing. *Adesa* (Vedic injunctions) forms his trunk. The (hymns) of the (sage) Atharva Angirasa form the tail which supports him. There is also the following stanza about it :

" He who knows the bliss of Brahman from which speech turns back along with mind, unable to reach it, does not fear at any time."

This is truly the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (*pranamaya*). Different from that which consists of mind (*manomaya*) there is another body which consists of intelligence (*vijnanamaya*). By this that (*manomaya*) is filled. This is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. *Sraddha* (reverence for the Guru and the scriptures) is his head. *Rtam* (eternal law of the universe) is his right wing. *Satyam* (Truth) is his left wing. *Yoga* is his trunk. *Mahat* (the Unmanifest) is the tail which supports him. Regarding this also there is the following stanza :

" *Vijnanam* (intelligence or understanding) offers sacrifice. It also performs the various *karmas* (religious rites). All the Devas meditate on *vijnana* as Brahman, the eldest (and the most important). If one meditates upon *vijnana* as Brahman and does not swerve from it he leaves aside in the body his sins and fully enjoys all (his) desires."

This (*vijnanamaya*) is the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (*manomaya*). Different from this (*vijnanamaya*) there is another body consisting of bliss (*anandamaya*). By this that (*vijnanamaya*) is filled. This one is (also) regarded as having the form of a man. It is imagined in the form of a man on the analogy of the other. *Priya* (love) is his head. *Moda* (joy) is his right wing. *Pramoda* (delight) is his left wing. Bliss is his trunk. Brahman is the tail which supports him. About this there is (also) the following stanza.

" If a person thinks that Brahman is non-existent he truly becomes non-existent (a non-entity). If he knows that Brahman exists he will be known (by the wise) as existent (one who has realized Brahman). " This (*anandamaya*) is the inner self of that which was mentioned earlier (*vijnanamaya*).

Now these questions arise : " Does one who has not known (Brahman) experience (Brahman) on leaving this world ? Does one who has known (Brahman) experience (Brahman) on leaving this world ? "

He (Brahman or Self) desired : " May I be born as many." He performed *tapas* (thought intensely). Having thought intensely he created all this — whatever is here (in the world). After creating it he entered into it. After entering into it he became the Being

(*sat*) and the Beyond (*tyat*). He became that which can be defined and that which cannot be defined, that which has a basis and that which has no basis, the sentient and the inert, the real (*satyam*) and the unreal (*anrtam*). He became the real. Whatever exists is called the real (*satyam*). There is (also) this stanza about it.

"In the beginning this was indeed non-existent. From it there arose existence. It made itself by itself. Therefore it is called the well-made. That which is well-made is *rasa* (joy, bliss). Obtaining this joy one becomes blissful. Who, indeed, could breathe in or breathe out if this bliss were not in the *akasa* (ether)? Indeed it is this alone that produces bliss. When one finds a support in this invisible, bodiless, indescribable, abodeless (state) he reaches the state of fearlessness. When one makes even the slightest distinction in it he is subject to fear. That itself is the cause of fear to the learned person who does not think deeply." There is also this stanza about it :

"For fear of It (Brahman) the wind blows, for fear of It the Sun rises, for fear of It Agni and Indra and Death, the fifth, run (to do their allotted work)"

Now this is an enquiry into the nature of bliss (*ananda*): Let it be supposed that there is a youth, a good and learned youth full of desires (ambitions), resolute and strong, and that to him belongs this entire earth full of riches. That is one unit of human joy. One hundred of these units of human joy make a unit of joy of Manushya Gandharvas (men who have acquired supernatural powers). One who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires also (possesses the same joy). One hundred such units of joy of Manushya Gandharvas constitute one unit of joy of Deva Gandharvas (celestial beings). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Deva Gandharvas constitute one unit of joy of the Pitris (manes) who inhabit the long-lasting world. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Pitris who inhabit the long-lasting world constitute one unit of joy of the Devas who are Ajanajas (those who are born in the world of the celestials). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Devas who are Ajanajas constitute one unit of joy of Karma Devas, those who have become Devas by virtue of their karma (action). It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Karma Devas constitute one unit of joy of Devas. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of the Devas constitute one unit of joy of Indra. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Indra constitute one unit of joy of Brihaspati. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Brihaspati constitute one unit of joy of Prajapati. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires. One hundred units of joy of Prajapati constitute one unit of joy of Brahman. It is also the joy of one who is learned in the Vedas and is not smitten by desires.

He who is in this man and he who is in the Sun are one and the same. He who knows this transcends, on departing from this world, the self which is *annamaya,* transcends the self which is *pranamaya,* transcends the self which is *manomaya,* transcends the self which is *vijnanamaya,* transcends the self which is *anandamaya.* There is also this stanza about it.

"He who knows the bliss of Brahman from which speech turns back along with mind, unable to reach it, experiences no fear from

any source. The (thoughts) 'why did I not do good? Why did I do evil?' do not torment him." He who knows this regards these two as his Self. These two truly fortify the Self of him who knows this. This is the secret (*Upanishad*).

May (Brahman) protect both of us. Ma (Brahman) sustain both of us. May we wor together intensely. May our study be illu minating. Let us not bear ill will toward each other.

OM! Peace, Peace, Peace.

Transcendence and Immanence

By
WEI WU WEI [1]

I AM NOT in front of you, I am not behind you,
Nor am I outside, or inside,
I am not above, nor am I below.

I am neither here nor there,
Neither near or far,
I am not anywhere, nor am I nowhere.

For where could there be any 'where'
Wherein I could be?

I have never come nor shall I ever go,
I know no before, nor any after,
I am not old, and I was never young.

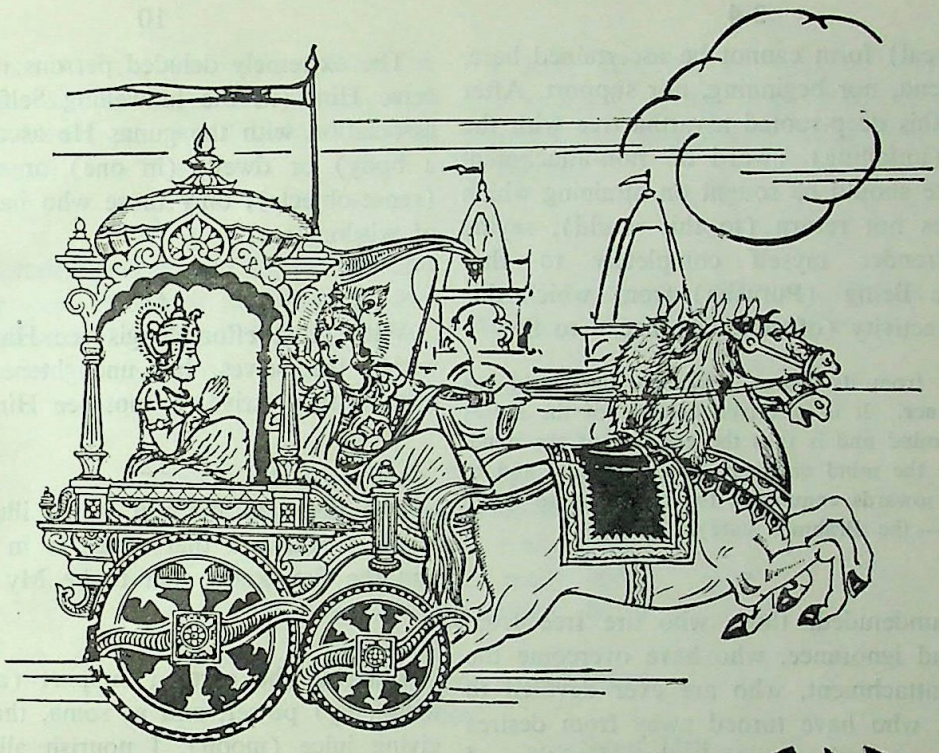
For whenever could there be a 'when'?
During which I could be?

I am not any thing, nor no thing,
For what thing could there be
That I could be, or not be,
Since there is no 'I'?

NOTE: It is interesting to remember that when Sri Ramana Maharshi was dying, he asked why people were weeping and was told that it was because he was leaving them. He answered, in apparent surprise, "But where do they think I could go to?" Is there record of a greater 'last word'? It would seem that its supreme significance is not yet very generally understood. But to 'explain' it would reduce its stupendous import.

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[1] From his latest book: *Posthumous Pieces*, pub: Hong Kong University Press.



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Sri Bhagavan Said :

The asvattha (tree) with roots above and branches below is said to be imperishable. The Vedas are its leaves. He who knows this knows the Vedas.

(The asvattha is the pippal tree sacred not only to the Hindus but also to the Buddhists and others. It means literally 'ever-changing' or momentary; yet it is said to be imperishable as it has neither beginning nor end. 'Roots above and branches below' indicates that the ultimate source of everything is the transcendental Being manifesting itself also on the physical plane).

2

Its branches spread above and below, growing well on *gunas* (the three qualities of Prakriti). The objects of the senses are its foliage and its roots stretch below in the world of men leading to actions which are binding.

3-4

Its (real) form cannot be ascertained here, nor its end, nor beginning, nor support. After cutting this deep-rooted asvattha tree with the strong (unfailing) sword of non-attachment that state should be sought on attaining which one does not return (to this world), saying "I surrender myself completely to that Supreme Being (Purusha) from which this ancient activity (of creation) began to flow".

(Apart from its source, Brahman, the world has no existence. It is perceived because of the senses and the mind and is thus the creation of the mind. To make the mind quiescent by detachment and to direct it towards enquiry is the only way to attain the Self — the Brahmic state).

5

The undeluded, those who are free from pride and ignorance, who have overcome the evil of attachment, who are ever devoted to the Self, who have turned away from desires and are entirely beyond the dualities of pleasure and pain, attain that imperishable state.

6

Neither sun, nor moon, nor fire illumine this state on attaining which one does not return. And this is My supreme abode.

7

A fragment of Myself, eternal (like Myself) becomes the jiva (the individual self) in the world and attracts to itself the six sense-organs, including the mind, based on Prakriti.

8

When the Lord (Isvara) takes a body and also when He leaves it (*lit.* ascends) He takes these (the six organs) and departs, like the wind that (takes and wafts) scents from their receptacles (flowers, etc.).

9

Presiding over the ear, the eye, the skin, the tongue, the nose and the mind He enjoys the sense-objects (so long as he is in a body).

10

The extremely deluded persons do not pe ceive Him (as the indwelling Self) when i association with the gunas He ascends (fro a body) or dwells (in one) or experience (sense-objects); only those who have the ey of wisdom see.

11

With great effort Yogis see Him dwellin within themselves, but unelightened person even if they strive, cannot see Him.

12

The lustre in the sun which illumines th whole world and that which is in the moo and the fire, know that to be My lustre.

13

Entering the earth I support (all) being with (my) power, and as soma, the strength giving juice (moon), I nourish all plants.

14

Having entered, as fire, into the bodies living beings and uniting with the Prana an the Apana (life-forces moving upward an downward), I digest the four kinds of food

15

Moreover, I reside in the hearts of all from Me come memory and knowledge a well as their loss. I am He to be known b all the Vedas. I alone am the author of Ve danta as well as the knower of the Vedas.

16

There are two Persons (Purushas) in th world — the perishable and the imperishable The perishable (comprises) all creatures, th imperishable is what is immutable.

17

But there is another over and above (these the Highest known as the Supreme Se (Paramatma). He is the imperishable Lor who, entering the three worlds, supports them

18

Since I transcend the perishable and am the imperishable I am known in the world as well as in the Vedas as the Supreme Person (Purushottama).

19

The undeluded person who knows Me thus as the Supreme Person is all-knowing and worships Me with his whole being, O Bharata.

20

I have revealed to you, O sinless one, this supreme secret. One who knows this becomes wise and attains the goal of his life, O Bharata.

Here ends the fifteenth chapter entitled *The Yoga of the Supreme Person.*

A prisoner in his cell
Watches a spider spin her web.
If his heart were really quiet,
If his eyes were really open,
Would he any longer be a prisoner?
So are we prisoners of our own personalities.

SHEN HUI

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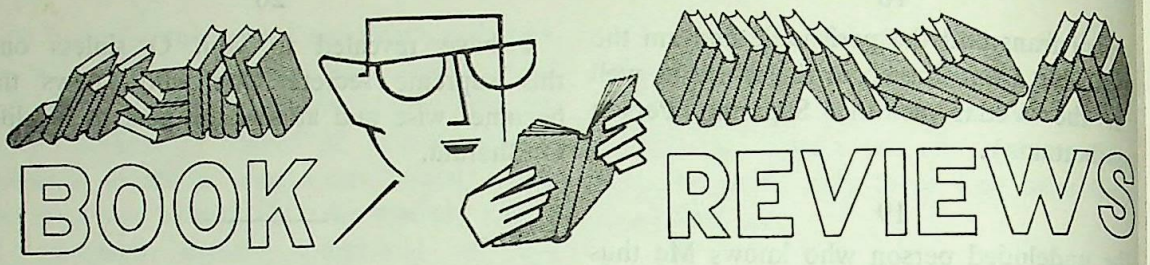
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THE RESTLESS QUEST OF MODERN MAN : W. G. Cole : Oxford University Press, New York : Price : $ 3.50.

A student of Paul Tillich, a stimulating teacher of Religion and author of a scholarly and candid work on "Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis", Dr. W. G. Cole in this book describes at length the modern malady of "meaninglessness" and prescribes in persuasive terms a well-tried and infallible remedy. The main argument is carried forward with mathematical precision and logical continuity, while the felicitous phrasing and copious, apt quotations help to cover this firm skeleton with warm flesh and blood.

The crisis of our time, cultural, political and economic, stems from the inability of men and women to find a satisfying "meaning" in their individual or collective lives. Faith in the essential goodness of man has been destroyed by Hitler, Stalin and the nuclear terror ; Freud and Marx have between them undermined human reason. In "the advanced countries" God is dead. Losing faith in God, men have lost faith in one another and have become cautious, uncommitted, unheroic. In the effort to convert basic anxiety into "manageable fear", they turn to conformity, mass ideas, mass movements and herd culture. A regimented mouse, man has forgotten the way to the Temple, his true home, where alone he can enjoy dignified freedom and serene security. Sex, mammon-worship and subservience to the nation-state have reduced him to heteronomy ; he is controlled and devoured from without. Men flee from the frightening freedom proffered by Christ into the comforting arms of Mother Church, where all they learn is docility, the piety which silences by pretending to answer the deep questions they dare not ask. Thus far the diagnosis, the concession made, the word spoken, to "the cultured despisers of religion."

What follows is a desperate attempt to argue intellectuals into heroism by pointing to them a God who is "Truth and Personhood and Love." I the process, poor Hindu mythology receives cru blows from the massive ignorance of an affluen society : "the cult of Shiva the destroyer, and Mother Kali, the Black Goddess of Death, represe worship of the dark ground . . . generally regarde as pathological and psychotic". (p. 67). Agai missionary enterprise is lauded for having convert Pacific islanders from cannibalism and the comfor ing conclusion is drawn : "whatever may be sa of contemporary Christianity qualitatively, it quantitatively on the march both in numbers adherents and in geographical spread" (p. 94). Th such "herd Christianity" should be recommend as the panacea for the modern evil condemned "herd culture" goes only to show that the Western Imperialism is very slow a-dying and on occasion mislead even a learned and toler writer like Dr. Cole even while engaged in t legitimate and difficult task of explaining to mode man the inner metanoesis prescribed by the Lo Jesus and other Seers as the infallible remedy f the restlessness of *samsara*.

RENASCENT HINDUISM by D. S. Sarm Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay : Price : Rs.

This selection compiled by Professor D. S. Sarm himself contains the cream of his voluminous wr ings published during four decades in various boo and journals. Besides the 24 items intended f the general public, there is an Appendix for young readers, which includes four charming tales charm ingly re-told. Taken all together, this careful chosen miscellany provides a comprehensive an illuminating survey of Hinduism past and presen The first essay is thoroughly rationalistic, critical an forward-looking ; it stresses the urgent need f bridging the gulf between faith and rituals an between morality and religion in contemporary Hindu ism. Other essays deal with the long history an the many magnificent achievements of Hinduism with the Gita in all its aspects, with the Ramaya and its relevance to modern man, with leaders f

Ramakrishna and Gandhi, and with the universal significance of the *Gayatri* mantra and of Sri Krishna's religion of love. At once scholarly and deeply sincere the volume holds between its covers the best of Professor Sarma's life-work and deserves to be seriously studied by all those genuinely interested in living Hinduism.

K. SWAMINATHAN.

THE ZEN TEACHING OF HUANG PO : on the Transmission of Mind, trans. John Blofeld, Buddhist Society, London : Price : 12/6.

This little book is a much-needed reprint of one of the most lucid and profound Zen classics. Master Huang Po, who flourished during the most vital period of Ch'an or Chinese Zen (he died around 850 A.D.), taught that there is only One Mind and nothing else. Once you stop conceptual thought, this Mind appears clearly to you as formless and without any qualities whatever : you see it is neither green nor yellow, neither long nor short, neither big nor small. You see it (which means It sees Itself) as void, bright, spotless, silent. "Only awake to the One Mind, and there is nothing whatsoever to be attained. This is the real Buddha. The Buddha and all sentient beings are the One Mind and nothing else."

SELECTED SAYINGS FROM THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM, chosen, arranged and translated from the Prajnaparamita by Edward Conze, Buddhist Society, London : Price : 12/6.

There is no more scholarly authority on Mahayana Buddhism than Dr. Conze, who in this reprint provides a convenient guide to the main themes of the vast (and mostly still untranslated) Prajnaparamita literature. Even with Dr. Conze's help, this teaching is extremely difficult, however — partly because it is intrinsically so profound, and partly because the authors (writing between, say, 100 B.C. and 300 A.D.) employ a highly specialised expository style abounding with paradoxes. Actually, these scriptures are in essence perfectly simple and straightforward : that is indeed their trouble — they are altogether too simple for our confusion-loving minds. Their theme is that all things are, in themselves, quite empty. So long as this proposition is tackled from the outside by the intellect, it remains baffling, if not absurd. But when one takes an inside view, when one comes round actually to seeing that "*here*, form is void", that the very Spot one always occupies is indeed perfectly empty (and therefore capacious of all things) then the whole puzzle suddenly makes sense. The one sample piece of the universe which one is fully qualified to look into having at last looked into itself, all other things are thereby looked into ; and the inside story of them all is manifestly this One Void.

D. H.

ORGANISED RELIGION By Hiram Elfenbein, The Philosophical Library, New York, pp. 230, Price : $ 5.

The sudden religious revival during the past decade makes it necessary for any earnest student of religion to study the implications of this spurt, not in the sterile style of sensation of fanatics, but rather in the calm, judicious atmosphere of serious scholars of a new science of philosophy. For this serious job Hiram Elfenbein seems to be eminently fitted as he has the zeal of a crusader, being a well-known lawyer fighting for civil liberties on behalf of one and all, regardless of his personal sympathies with their views and sometimes when he was diametrically opposed to their programmes. Here in this book, he has presented a persuasive discussion of formal worship of God ; and as it is written in a layman's style without any highbrow philosophical terminology, it is a lucid layman's argument for thoughtful laymen.

After describing in detail the taboos, reticence, false standards, hypocritical cant, "utter nonsense", mental cowardice, and time-and-money-consuming effort which envelope this elementary subject of religion in the present day world, the author wonders how one can expect to bring mankind to sober and intelligent consideration of such earthly questions as the Atom Bomb, Population Explosion, the organization of a human society that could provide plenty for all, or the elimination of poverty. A study of the book leaves the reader with the conviction that a person imbued with such fearful superstitions about 'here and hereafter' cannot be fully objective in his contemplation of philosophy, economics or education and morals, and therefore, he would not be surprised at the crisis of character in modern civilization.

If secular events are banal and unfulfilling, leading nowhere in the perplexities that beat upon the personal life or in the patterns of cultures that appear to have no goal save self-perpetuation, organised religions have fared no better, and it is, therefore, inevitable that the "God-is Dead" thesis has penetrated even religious student bodies.

According to him, "the great obstacle to intelligent discussion about formal religion among the masses is the non-meeting of the minds on the "facts" between the adherents and the dissenters of the organised creed, which is involved

in the disagreement. Where those persons who are disillusioned rely on abstract philosophical or historical data that are not available or easily verified, say, for the advocates of Christianity, the learned dissertations citing these erudite sources are tragically lost on the people who take the Good Book reverently as the LAST and ONLY TRUTH on the subject. These blindly faithful souls can be led out of their self-imposed darkness only if we join with them in an argument which tentatively accepts the root allegations of their Holy Bible as if true in "fact", and then only if we reason with them from these assumed "facts" to the real truth which is, of course, the untruth of the Old and New Testament premises. We certainly cannot count on the literal bible-believers to undertake research for facts by delving into the archives of the Vatican, for instance, to find the historical record of events. Nor can we expect them to take our word or opinion of what these historical sources reveal. All such argument on our part is futile. In order to convince church-goers, in order to present them with a convincing line of reasoning, on the other hand, the only practical course is to show them that the proof of their error and of Christianity's error lies not in the literary shrines of great philosophical writings but in the erratic Old and New Testaments which they have in their own homes or can readily find in their own churches."

If such Chapter titles as "God's First Commandment : Thou Shalt be Ignorant", "God, What a Nightmare !", "The Hallmark of Hypocrisy" "Christianity — The Biggest Show on Earth", etc. etc. are daring, the author goes further in trying to prove that the foundation of all the crusades, expulsions, exterminations and persecutions of major importance of the world is organised religion itself. Although a Jew by descent, he has been, to quote his own words, looking on "Ministers, Priests, Rabbis" as being categorically either fools or hypocrites — fools if they believed the inanities of their bibles, hypocrites if they did not and merely used them for personal or institutional greed.

This is a dangerous book, and therefore must be read with caution. With such complex and controversial issues treated in a challenging manner, it stimulates new trains of thought and provides sensitive themes for discussion so that the devout and earnest aspirant to truth can create once more a new and more significant life of religion outside the pale of organised religions.

ARGUS

A CONSTRUCTIVE SURVEY OF UPANISHADIC PHILOSOPHY : By R. D. Ranade : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay. Pp. 340. Price : Rs. 20/-.

Ever since this solid work of Dr. Ranade was published some four decades ago, it has held its premier place among the most authentic exposition of the Upanishadic lore to appear in modern times. The author's approach has been both philological and philosophical in a manner that is acceptable to Western scholarship, but at the same time doing justice to the supra-intellectual content of the Upanishads. As he points out in his long introduction, there is not one system of philosophy in these texts, but a number of systems leading to one Absolute Reality.

The Upanishads restate in their own terms the perceptions of the older seers clothed in the symbolic language of the Vedic Hymns ; basing themselves upon this foundation, they fathom the depths of the Soul, and scale the heights of the Spirit with the aid of an intuitivised intellect. The results of this adventure of theirs are recorded in a system of points as it were. They are not expositions in the modern sense of the term. They are more in the nature of graphs with notes wherever necessary. This is so especially with the older Upanishads - thirteen of them — which form the subject matter of the present study.

In his brilliant analysis of the trend of thought in the Upanishadic Age, Dr. Ranade shows how the older thinkers grappled with the same metaphysical and psychological problems as hold the field even today. "The *elan vital* which, in Bergson wears not much more than a physiological aspect appears in Aruni as a great organic force, only much more psychologised and spiritualised. The pyramidal depictions of Reality as on the basis of Space and Time with the qualitative emergence of Life and Mind and Deity in the course of evolution which we meet with in Alexandar and Lloyd Morgan, is present in those old Upanishads only with a stress on the inverted process of Deity as the primary existent from which came forth Mind and Life and Space and Time in the course of devolution. The very acute analysis of the epistemology of Self Consciousness, which we meet with in the Upanishads, can easily hold its own against any similar doctrine even of the most advanced thinker of today." (P. xiii)

Incidentally, the author effectively rebuts the charge of Pessimism against the philosophy of Upanishads.

After giving a general and illuminating background of the Upanishadic literature in the course of which the various methods followed by the different seers to expound their realisations are described, the writer studies the Thought as a whole under certain broad headings, e.g. Cosmogony, Psychology, Meta-

physics, Ethics, and Mysticism. Each chapter is supplemented with the original texts cited in the argument. A whole chapter is devoted for tracing the roots of later philosophies in the Upanishads. An attempt is made — necessarily tentative — to trace the development of the theories of Transmigration, Ethics, Monism etc. There is also a Bibliographical note at the end giving a historical account of literature that had appeared till 1926 on the Upanishads.

A most satisfying book in which the scholar and the mystic in Dr. Ranade join hands.

PATH TO DELIVERANCE : By Nyanatiloka : Bauddha Sahitya Sabha, Colombo. Pp. 193. Price : Rs. 3.00.

This is a clear and concise account of the teachings of the Buddha based upon the Sutta Pitaka and allied literature. The discussion in the form of parables, dialogues, proceeds around the central theme of the Four Noble Truths and the Path to Deliverance.

The Truths are : the truth of Suffering, the truth of the Origin of Suffering, the truth about the Extinction of Suffering, the truth about the Path leading to that extinction. This Path is eightfold : Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right bodily Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. These eight constituents of the Path are divided into three divisions viz. Wisdom (the first two), Morality (the next three), Concentration (the last three).

The discipline leads through seven stages of Purity which are : Purity of Morality, Purity of Mind, Purity of Understanding, Purity of Escaping from Doubt, Purity of the Knowledge and Vision regarding Path and Not-Path, Purity of the Knowledge and Vision of the Progress, Purity of Knowledge and Vision.

The writer assembles together various expositions of these concepts and adds his own notes for clarification. While on the subject of Right Speech, for instance, he notes : "Four kinds of speech in positive language : true speech, reconciling speech, mild speech, and wise speech." (P 16) The book is both a guide to an understanding of the Thought and a manual for the practice of the Discipline of the Buddha.

RAMDAS SPEAKS Vol. I : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 220. Price : Rs. 2.50.

In this account of the talks of Swami Ramdas in Europe, during the first ten days of his World-tour, we have an exposition of the philosophy and practice of God-life at first hand. For in every discussion with his callers Swamiji proceeds from his own experience and not on the basis of Sastras. The questions asked are of various kinds, some of them embarrasingly personal but he is unruffled and answers from his poise in the Divine Love which is more real to him than anything else in the world.

When he set out on his tour he made it clear that he was not going abroad as a teacher but as a servant of God, God in Humanity. The essential problem of the world, he said, is the problem of disharmony and that can be solved only by each one realising the source of all harmony in oneself, the Divine. Once this Divine seated in the heart of each one is realised, there is an automatic recognition of the same Divine in others and there is a spontaneous flow of Love on the world. There are many ways of realising the Divine, but the easiest, says Ramdas, is the Way of Love. And of this Way, adoration of the Name is the key. The Name, the mantra of the Name, to be fruitful must be received from a Guru (P 67) and not just picked up from a book ; only when communicated by one who has already realised the truth of that Name in himself, is the mantra effective. Along with the word, the power of the Guru passes to the seeker.

Not all, however, are attracted to the path of *nama-japa*. There are many — especially in the West — who are interested in the Kundalini Yoga and some of the pages in this book are devoted to questions on that topic. To take up just one interesting reply : "When the Kundalini is roused by the contact of a saint, a desire for God-realisation springs up in the person. When the Kundalini comes to any one centre, certain peculiar symptoms are visible in him. From the Muladhara when it rises to the Svadhishthana Chakra, the aspirant develops dispassion for worldly objects and enjoyments. When it reaches the Manipura it is said that the man rejects everything relaing to the enjoyment of his senses and his mind becomes more and more resolute upon getting at the Divine. When it comes to the heart centre, the Anahata, he develops one-pointed devotion to God, and love and compassion for all the creatures in the world. Whenever he sees suffering he cannot bear it and he strives to alleviate it. His heart melts at the distress of others. When the Kundalini reaches the Vishuddha Chakra, at the throat, the aspirant is averse to talking about anything but God. From there it reaches the Ajna Chakra between the eye-

brows, and he sees visions of divine forms, lights and flashes. When it reaches the highest Chakra, the Sahasrara, at the crown of the head, the aspirant loses consciousness of the body and goes into Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in which he realises that he and God are one." (P 184-5).

There are many observations of value to the seeker e.g. dangers of Pranayama, dangers of changing Gurus, ways of concentration, meditation, absorption, six kinds of Bhakti, three kinds of Samadhi, the course of Japa Yoga, the manner in which spirituality can be made dynamic in day-to-day life etc. The author's reminiscences of his contacts with different saints, his experiences in yoga and above all his disarming simplicity of the Child of God make the volume highly pleasing and interesting. We look forward to further volumes in the series.

RELIGION IN PRACTICE : By Swami Prabhavananda : Allen and Unwin, London. Pp. 160. Price : 40sh.

Based upon lectures delivered by the author to American audiences during the last decade, this book carries the message of practical spirituality to the common man. The approach is catholic and seeks to synthesise the best in the traditions of the East and the West and the discussion proceeds in a conversational manner with plenty of ancedotes, stories from Sri Ramakrishna, personal reminiscences etc.

There are in all five sections dealing with the Problem of life, the Goal of Religion, the Methods to arrive at it, the Exemplars e.g. Buddha, Christ, Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna, Questions and Answers. Swamiji emphasises that the goal of the awakened man is nothing short of a perfection of union with the Godhead and that too *here and now,* not somewhere beyond after death. Study, meditation, work are the means to be adopted under the guidance of a competent teacher. The Divine Grace is indispensable but personal effort is also necessary till the personal will is entirely surrendered to the Divine Will.

Among the many interesting topics dealt with in these pages are the question of conscious return from Samadhi, the standpoint of Zen denying the necessity of any spiritual discipline, Humanism. The author's remarks are unexceptionable : It is possible to carry back the memory of one's experience during the samadhi if the consciousness is developed and trained in that direction. Spiritual discipline *is* necessary to remove the veil of ignorance tha conceals the Reality within ourselves. (P 122) Regarding the third subject, he narrates an incide in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. " One day Sri Rama krishna was in a very high spiritual mood, and i that mood he was, as it were, talking to himself There were many disciples present and among them was young Narendra. Sri Ramakrishna quoted well-known teaching of Sri Chaitanya, repeatin over and over again, ' Compassion for mankind ! Then he said, ' Compassion — compassion — no no ! no ! Not compassion — but service.' Naren listened attentively to these words, and as he left th room he said : ' I have learned a great lesson toda If I live I shall some day give this truth to th world.' (P 230).

The last section contains a number of answers t questions often asked in this sphere. To cite on typical reply : " Why is it easier to meditate at certai hours of the day ? There are four times during th day and night which are considered especially con ducive to meditation : dawn, midday, sunset an midnight. At these hours, nature takes on an att tude of calmness. Take advantage of these hour whenever you can. But after all, where do we medi tate ? In our own minds. Therefore, any tim you meditate is beneficial. Later on you will b successful in your meditation wherever and when ever you meditate. But in order to reach th stage where you can become absorbed in God regardless of external circumstances, it is very important that you practise the spiritual discipline regularly at *the same time every* day." (P 247) At the same time daily, for there is a rhythm i the cycle of nature and conditions form themselves favourably at that hour once the habit of call is established.

M. P. PANDIT

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER By E. Bharadwaja, Matrusri Publications Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh, India, pp. 110. Price Rs. 1.75.

This small book deals with the life and teachings of a saintly person whose fame is spreading slowly and whom her devotees call the Mother of Jillella Jamudi or simply The Mother. After reading it one can understand the devotion which she inspires in a large number of men and women. Born in 1923 in a small out of the way village in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh the Mother is said to have displayed from her childhood strange wisdom. The details of her life are rather meagre but whic

is available shows that she was a precocious child whose utterances often puzzled the elders about her. Her unusual traits were regarded as signs of something other worldly, but it was only after she married and came to live with her husband in the village of Jillellamudi that she became the object of particular veneration by a growing circle of persons chiefly from Guntur and the adjacent districts. Many of them are said to have had strange and unaccountable experiences after coming into contact with her. They are convinced that she is an Avatar and she, in her turn, looks upon all of them as her children and loves them with true maternal affection.

An institution significantly called the 'House of All' has latterly sprung up around her. Here her devotees move about freely on equal terms and attend to all kinds of work cheerfully without any distinction of high and low. Their selfless work makes them karma yogins, their devotion to Mother makes them true bhaktas, her words are looked upon as the highest wisdom and her grace is regarded as sufficient for their spiritual uplift. Examples of her sayings are :

'I am the Mother and you are the offspring ; Reality itself is my state ; Motherhood does not mean mere womanhood ; Mother is the infinite, the eternal basis of all existence. It is that which is all and cannot be understood ; I am not anything now that I was not earlier. If there is a difference it is only in your understanding of me ; Mindfulness is real worship ; Perfect equanimity at all times and in all conditions is Samadhi ; One may remain in samsara, but samsara should not be allowed to dwell in one's heart.'

The language is not always elegant and the method of presentation is not quite satisfactory. In spite of these defects the book is bound to be interesting to all those who are spiritually inclined.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN

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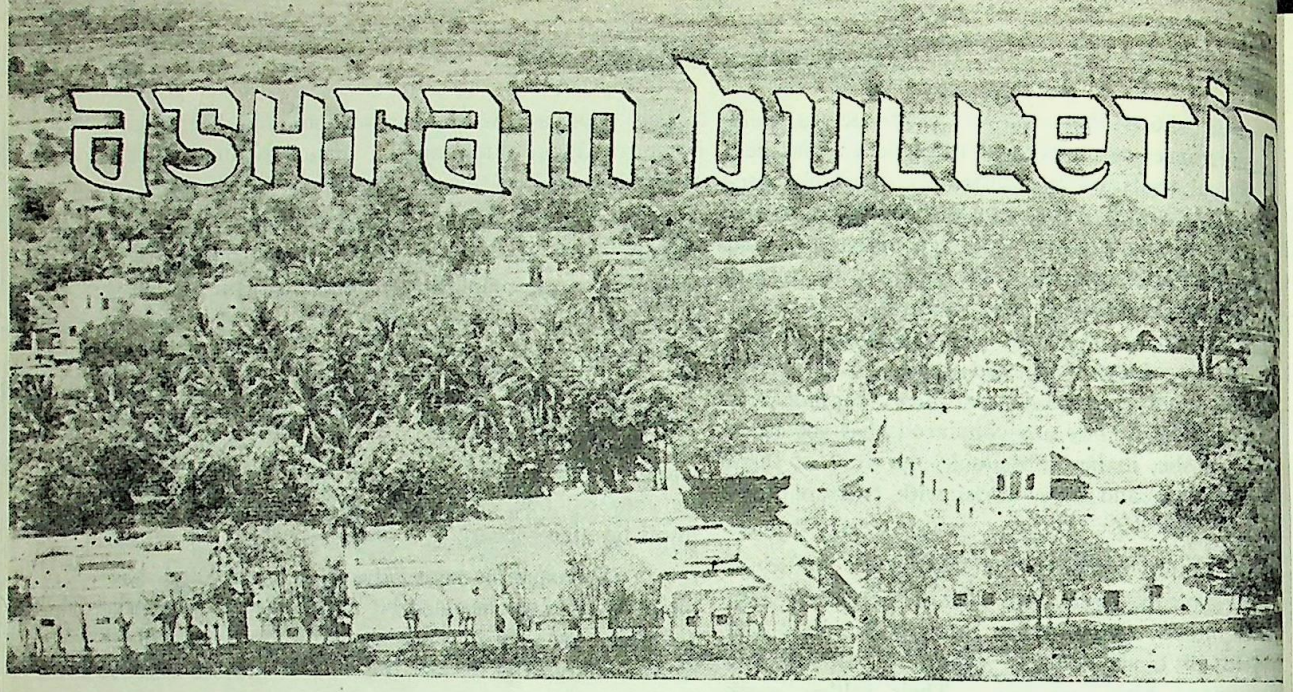
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DEEPAM FESTIVAL AT THE ASHRAM

A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR PARTICIPATE

THE annual festival of the Deepam or the Holy beacon on the Arunachala Hill, known as Karthigai Festival, was celebrated in the temple of Sri Arunachaleswara in the town from the 25th November to the 3rd December.

The colourful ten-day festival marked by grand morning and evening processions of the gorgeously decorated and bejewelled images of gods and goddesses, mounted on large and artistic *vahanams* or mounts, like the Nandi (Siva's bull), the Kalpaka Vriksha (the wish-fulfilling tree), the Kamadenu (the wish-fulfilling cow) etc. was held in fine weather and attracted large crowds from far and near. The top of the Hill was free of clouds (which is not always the case at this part of the year) when the sacred beacon was lit.

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan had according to a long-established practice, gathered in front of a large portrait of Sri Bhagavan, placed on the northern verandah of the New Hall facing a tripod with a cauldron containing a large wick standing in the middle of devotive offerings of clarified butter and oil.

Among these were the QUEEN MOTHER FREDERIKA OF GREECE,[1] her daughter PRINCESS IRENE and two of their relations, who had motored all the way from Madras and arrived at the Ashram in time to witness the lighting of the beacon, accompanied and guided by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University o Madras.

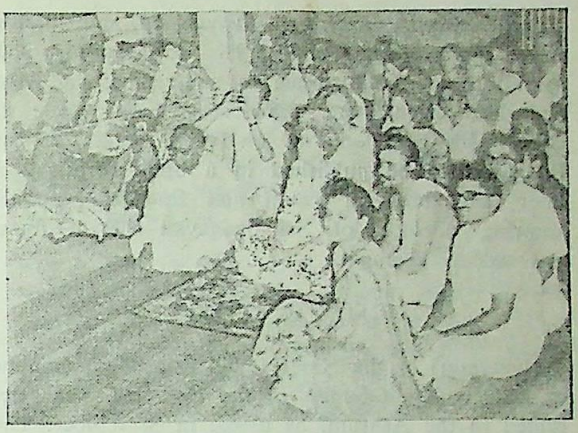
In the evening, as the hour drew nigh every eye was turned to the top of the Hill and when the sacred flame sprang into view at the stroke of si there arose from hundreds of throats the cry '*Anna malaikku Aro hara*', meaning, salutations t Arunachala, the Hill which destroys sins. This wa the signal for the lighting of the Ashram beacon and the chanting of Sri Bhagavan's poem, *Aksha ramanamalai* or the *Marital Garland of Letters*, t the refrain of 'Arunachala Siva'. The distinguished visitors were visibly moved. The Queen Mother listened to the chanting with rapt attention.

After taking dinner in the Ashram dining hall the Queen Mother retired for the night, while Princess Irene and party proceeded, in the company of a number of devotees from the Ashram, to circumambulate the Hill on foot. The moon was full and the weather was cool. The Princess said later that she had never experienced such happiness and peace before. The next day, as a special case, the Cinema films on Sri Bhagavan, taken during his lifetime, were shown to them in the morning after they had the breakfast in the Ashram. Before leaving the Ashram, thanking the President

[1] This is her second visit to the Ashram. Her first visit was in 1966 — please see our January 6 issue, p. 79.



The Queen Mother Frederika of Greece and her party are received at the Ashram by its President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan is standing first from the right.



So keen was the Queen Mother to have the glimpse of the first flames on top of Arunachala that she could not take away her eyes from the hill-top!

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the Queen Mother said : "The Deepam will ever be lit in my memory all my life. I congratulate you all for keeping up the tradition, serenity and purity of the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi."

Besides the Queen Mother and party there were a number of old devotees who had specially come for the occasion. Among these may be mentioned, Dr. Satyanarayana and Mrs. Satyanarayana, Sri Raghubale Rao, Zamindar of Peddapavani, Sri Framji Dorabji, Mr. & Mrs. Sonarao, Dr. W. Radhakrishnayya and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

PATALA LINGAM

Readers of Sri Bhagavan's life will remember that, soon after his arrival at Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana spent some time in an underground shrine, known as the Patala Lingam, situated in the mantap (raised hall) of the thousand-pillars inside the Arunachaleswara Temple. The lingam in this shrine had long been neglected and no puja was performed at it. About 20 years ago a small tower was raised over it but there was no kumbhabhishekam or ceremonial consecration done. This was performed on 3rd November in the presence of Sardar Ujjal Singh, the Governor of Madras, and some of the district officials and several prominent citizens of the town. Arrangements have now been made by the authorities of the temple to offer puja at the shrine every day.

SPECIAL VEDAPARAYANA

Vedaparayana or the chanting of the Vedas before Sri Bhagavan's shrine is a daily feature of the Ashram. But only small portions of the Yajur Veda and Rig Veda are chanted. Those who can chant the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharvana Veda are extremely few in these parts and they do not come together except on rare and important occasions.

However, early in November, the inmates of the Ashram had the privilege of listening to all the four vedas chanted (a few portions) successively by persons who had specially come to Tiruvannamalai in connection with the *Sathabhishekam* (Eighty-first birthday) of Sri Srinivasa Sastri, well-known to the inmates and visitors of the Ashram as the *Purohit* who performs the weekly Sri Chakra Puja and takes part in special religious functions. Each Veda is chanted in a different manner and when the chanting was done, as in this instance, by trained persons the effect was not only pleasing but often thrilling. Some days later the Ashramites had a similar opportunity of listening to the chanting or rather singing of the Sama Veda by a group of ten persons who had come to Tiruvannamalai in connection with the Karthigai Festival.

SAT SANGH

Sri Sadhu Om continues to expound Sri Bhagavan's works, on Thursdays and Sundays. *Aksharamanamalai* or *The Marital Garland of Letters,* is the first work taken up by him, after completing the verses on the importance of Arunachala. After reading the detailed Tamil commentary of Sri Muruganar on each verse he proceeds so give a fuller explanation, in the course of which he brings out not only its spiritual significance but also its poetic beauty. He also points out the parallel verses in the other works of Sri Bhagavan, like *Ulladu Narpadu* (Reality in Forty Verses) and *Upadesa Saram* (Essence of Instruction in Thirty Verses) and also from ancient Tamil vedantic works like

Yoga Vasishta, Kailvalya Navaneeta and verses from other Tamil saints. His explanations and narrations are both simple to understand, and vast and deep in meaning. Efforts are being made to collect his commentaries on these verses of Sri Bhagavan to be published in a book form, at a later date, both in Tamil and English. Tamil-knowing devotees of Sri Bhagavan cherish these meetings very much.

NAVARATHRI

Navarathri or the Nine Nights Festival, in honour of Devi or the Goddess of the Universe, was celebrated in the Ashram, as usual, in September. The image of the Goddess, Yogambal, was beautifully dressed up and decorated in a different manner every day to the delight of the devotees. There were also special pujas on all the nine nights. As a concluding part of the festival, the goddess was taken in procession round the Mathrubutheswara temple and reinstalled to its original place.



Sri Yogambal taken in procession.

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS

Besides the visitors and pilgrims mentioned under the heading, ' Deepam Festival ', we have had several others with us during the quarter.

* * *

Thus we had *Justice K. Veeraswami* of the Madras High Court and his family among us. They were impressed with the neat and peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram.

Srimathi Vijayalakshmi Mafatlal, mother Mafatlal Brothers, the well-known textile magna came with her daughter, *Smt. Usha,* and spen day at the Ashram in September. She wishes spend not less than a month and a half at Ashram and hopes to fulfil this sankalpa very so

* * *

Sri Shankerrao Deo, a well-known co-wor of Mahatma Gandhi, had visited the Ashra few years back. He was drawn again although could not stay for more than a day at the Ashra

* * *

Among pilgrims from abroad were *Miss Jacque Le Prince* and *Miss Yvonne Dauguet,* about wh last visit we wrote in our April '68 issue p. They were drawn to ' this freedom-filled and pe emitting Ashram ' as they described it and prope to spend a fairly long time now.

* * *

Mr. Roger Henninger from France, referred to our last issue is still with us. *Mr. Horst Rutko* also continues to stay.

* * *

Mrs. Barbara Rose, also referred to in our issue, came and stayed for a few days. Again is now with us and will be in the Ashram Jayanthi. She is such an ardent and enthusi devotee of Sri Bhagavan that she has been to communicate her enthusiasm to several of friends. Among these are, *Mr. & Mrs. Earl Ros Mr. Neal Rosner, Mr. John B. Dawson and Dick Page,* all of whom came to the Ashram stayed some days (Neal Rosner and J B. Dawson are still staying with us). Mrs. R who is an adept at Hatha Yoga believes tha helps her in understanding Sri Bhagavan's teachi better.

* * *

Mr. E. Santa Potess from Colombia, father Irma de Valera, the artist whose sketch of Ar chala in the Zen style, was reproduced by us our July '65 issue, p. 202, had been longing to the Ashram, but could do so only lately. Du his stay which extended to a month he visited the places associated with Sri Bhagavan. His de tion was so great that very often he could not k back his tears when he came to the various sp hallowed by Sri Bhagavan's stay.

* * *

Mrs. Annalisa Rajagopal of Ojai, U.S.A., a member of the Ashram and life-subscriber to journal, and a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagav came with three of her friends and spent a days, in the course of which all of them went ro

Arunachala and visited the places sacred to Sri Bhagavan.

* * *

Mr. Charles Reeder and *Mrs. Anne Reeder,* married only in June this year, went to Japan to take Zen lessons. They met our friend, Mrs. Delancy Kapleau (for whom see our issue of Oct. '67, p. 336) and the natural consequence was that they were directed to stay at least a few days at Sri Ramanasramam, in India, before returning home. The merry couple came with an intention to spend a couple of days at the Ashram, but they actually stayed for more than 90 days. They are now convinced followers of Sri Bhagavan!

* * *

We should not forget to mention *Nagasawa Tetsuo* and *Itzuka Chicko* from Japan, who spent a few weeks here. They were visiting the various Ashrams in India before starting an Ashram of their own in Japan. They have assured to come again.

* * *

The following pilgrims from abroad also came during the quarter:—

1. Judith Ann Schwartz (U.S.A.)
2. Liesbeth Marleentze Boers (Dutch)
3. Seraphim Francis Martin (Irish)
4. Pieter de Wit (Dutch)
5. Marcella Dean Deeter (U.S.A.)
6. Wadah Konry (U.S.A.)
7. Richard John Hearn (Canada)
8. Rev. Bodhipriya (Spanish)
9. Joseph Skulin (U.S.A.)
10. Bela Gatonvi (Hungary)
11. Arthur Albert Poolman (U.K.)
12. Rev. Fr. Hilarion (U.S.A.)
13. Richard Clancey (U.K.)

* * *

How some of them came to hear of Sri Bhagavan's teachings will be seen from the following extracts :—

My first steps on the path leading to Bhagavan was taken in Morocco. I was living in the South, and for Christmas 1947 a friend sent me a copy of Paul Brunton's famous book, "*A Search in Secret India.*" For me, as for many others, it proved to be a revelation, a flash of light and life.

Some years later I was given "*Studies on Ramana Maharshi*" which was the complement of the previous book, though it may be a bit more scientific in its approach, which fitted in quite well with my Theosophical background. On the same occasion I was given Bhagavan's picture, which, more than any of the writings attracted me and evoked a response within.

This picture became the permanent witness of my working hours, of my meditations, of my struggles. "The more you look the more his comeliness increases" it is said in a Tamil poem of Sri Muruganar.

However, because of family and professional reasons — and financial reasons also — I was unable to come to India before the beginning of this year (i.e. exactly twenty years after having read Paul Brunton's book.). After having visited North India and Nepal the end of my journey was Tiruvannamalai which I reached in mid-February.

The serene beauty of the place and the Ashram's warm welcome both attracted me right away. I found some mysterious spell, not only due to the somewhat exotic atmosphere, but to some more subtle cause. Is it due to the fact that it was the place where the Master lived, or due to the closeness of Arunachala, the Red Hill at the foot of which the Ashram lies? I couldn't tell, but it was undeniable that one felt this to be one of the world's most holy places, and that, imperceptibly, one became more and more aware of it.

I had to come here again — it was a must!! and six months later, as a matter of fact, I was back here.

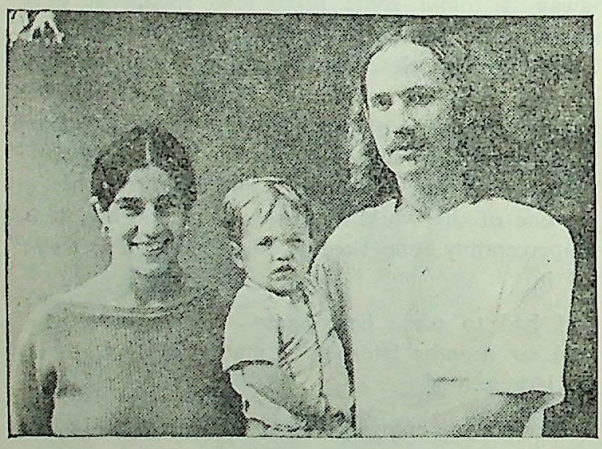
Nowadays enjoying simple happiness in an atmosphere of silence and peace, I seem to be reborn to a new life where the only ultimate concern is Self-Realization.

To reach this goal, the main points of the Master's teachings are orally explained by old devotees who heard and faithfully recollect them, but to follow them is a very individual matter, to be adjusted to each one's own nature.

The Ashram life is freedom itself, and this is its great strength. Nevertheless, no matter how individually orientated the Ashram life is, one can easily feel a deep communal spirit for example at mealtimes, when side by side sit the old devotees of the Master and people from America, Europe, the Far East, and so on, belonging to all religions and from every social background. Somehow a real little society of nations, an example of universal brotherhood, through which one can feel the Guru's everlasting presence.

— ROGER HENNINGER, *France*

For several years I was a student studying anthropology. My studies were occasionally interesting, but they did not give the answers to what I considered important questions. At the time I held no belief in anything beyond the material world and the individual personality. Beginning in 1965 I had several experiences with the mind-altering substance LSD, and I became aware of something far greater than my little Self. By 1967 I decided that self-discipline and a structured systematic technique was required if I was to increase my awareness of That, and ultimately realize my identity with it. I decided to study Yoga and I was fortunate enough to receive instruction first in hatha yoga and later in the teachings of the higher yoga inclusive those of Bhagavan from an ardent devotee of His, Barbara Rose. My wife, Lois, also became interested and she follows the same path.



Mr. & Mrs. Rosner with their son.

Reading of Bhagavan's life, and studying and practising his teaching, we decided to come to visit the Ashram and Arunachala where we have spent a most remarkable three weeks.

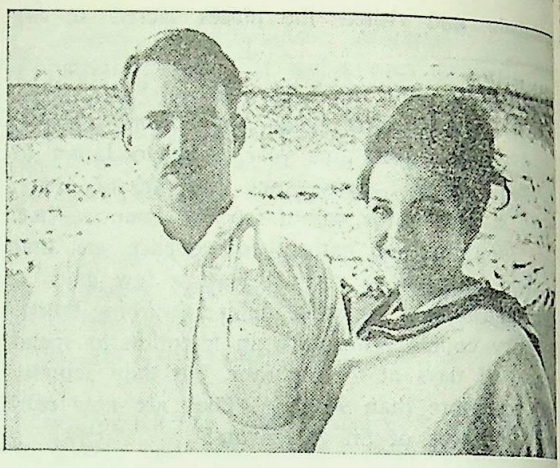
Our thanks to the Ashram management for their kindness and also to the many ashram residents who have helped make our stay unforgettable.

Most important, our gratitude to Bhagavan for drawing us unto Him and for making our visit possible.

— Earl Rosner and Lois Rosner, *U.S.A.*

* * *

Bhagavan's grace drew us in subtle ways, so that we came without much knowing or planning. Now, being here is happiness itself.



Mr. & Mrs. Reeder

His presence pervades everything around the ashram — seeming to flow as the new grass sprouting on the slope of the hill, as the pure white clouds wreathing the summit in the early morning, or the peaceful look in a shepherd boy's eye.

There is not much to tell of how we came to the Ashram. We were in Kamakura practising zazen and met there Delancey Kapleau. She showed us a picture of the hill and told us a little of her sadhana here — and so the decision to come decided itself. From the moment we drove up to the gate in a bandy cart, we began to feel a great relief, like two dusty travellers coming upon a cool mountain spring and tumbling happily in.

Originally we planned to stay for six or seven days, but our visit easily extended for as many weeks, as time flowed without ripples. The kindness of the Ashram management in all respects will not soon be forgotten. And the guidance we received is something for which we will never, however long we try, be able to give full thanks.

— Charles and Anne Reeder, *U.S.A.*

* * *

As a young teen-ager, I remember my mother came home with three copies of a Dutch translation of Heinrich Zimmer's book "*Der Weg Zum Selbst*" (the Way to the Self). As the picture of Bhagavan in this book struck me very much — those radiant eyes — I asked my mother for a copy of the book. She didn't want to give it saying it would be too difficult to me. "Very possible", I answered, "But I will need it later, and then you will not have a copy left for me any more". So she gave one to me. It proved to be

too difficult indeed at that time, the more so by its long and complicated sentence structure. So the book stood on the shelf, forgotten for quite some time.

Though I was very interested in Vedanta and Sufism, I never came across any literature on Bhagavan until about four years ago when Arthur Osborne's books on the Maharshi came to my hand. Then I knew for sure that Bhagavan and His teachings were IT for me, not in the least by Mr. Osborne's very lucid way of writing which made me feel that he himself must have experienced Bhagavan's teachings in his own heart.

To my regret I'll have to leave the Ashram tomorrow after having had the privilege of staying here for three weeks. I didn't experience here anything particular whatsoever, but I did notice that one's mind is turned away from the world and that old thought patterns, thought habits, got broken down without much effort; thus clearly a process of purification.

I am very thankful Bhagavan drew me to His abode and I do hope He will bring me back here again in the future.

— MARLENE BOERS, *U.S.A.*

* * *

I first came to know of Sri Maharshi about three and a half years ago when my daughter gave me a Spanish translation of Mr. Arthur Osborne's book "*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge.*" His account of Sri Maharshi's enlightenment even in his boyhood greatly impressed me. Shortly afterwards I got a photograph of Sri Maharshi sitting on a rock with his legs crossed and showing all his properties, namely a strip of cloth, a waterpot and a walking stick. This image has never since been absent from my mind. I was first surprised and then filled with admiration which soon turned into devotion and love and finally ended in constant worship.



Mr. Santo Potess

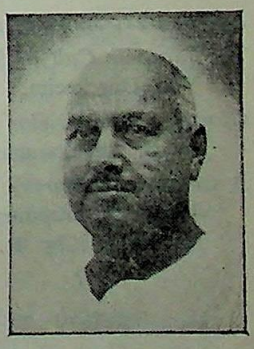
Reading the journal *The Mountain Path* and the books published by the Ashram, especially *Maha Yoga* by "Who", led to an inner conviction that Divinity had embodied itself in Sri Bhagavan for showing to a materialist and corrupt world the simple and direct path of Self-Realization. I naturally had an intense longing to see the place where He had lived and taught, but my circumstances did not permit me to fulfil my desire immediately. However an opportunity came unexpectedly last September and I was able to visit the Ashram and stay there for some days. At the very outset of my journey from Madrid to India I lost my bag containing my passport and money, but by Sri Bhagavan's grace I got them back in a most unexpected manner. Again, when I left Madras on my way to Tiruvannamalai, I felt a little apprehensive of what I would meet with there. But very soon I became completely free of anxiety and worry. At the Ashram I was received kindly and taken to the Master's shrine and the little room where he had cast off his body. I could not keep back my tears when I saw the bed on which he had passed away and his few belongings kept there. I likewise felt a deep emotion in the Hall and at Skandashram and Virupaksha cave on the Hill. At the last mentioned place I felt for a moment as if I had been raised to a higher plane of consciousness. I still remember this experience with joy. Once I also saw an intense light for some minutes in the course of my meditation with eyes shut.

I have nothing more to say except that my faith in Sri Bhagavan is complete. May His grace enable me to surrender absolutely to Him, the Self!

— E. SANTO POTESS, *Colombia.*

* * *

Lt. Col. H. Lall from Hyderabad stayed here for a week. Our devotee, Major I. J. Taneja,[1] brought him when he came to participate in the Karthigai festival. Since it was the first visit to Arunachala, the very impact and power of Arunachala penetrated into Mr. Lall so much that just after going once round the Hill, he could do no more. However, he enclosed himself in solitude and he avows to be back at the Ashram at the very next opportunity. As usual, Major Taneja, during his stay, continued his daily pradakshina round Arunachala and adhered to his sadhana exclusively.



Lt. Col. Lall

[1] His article appears on page 29.

OBITUARY

We have lost a good and sincere bhaktha in the passing away of *Sri K. S. Varadan* (of Calcutta). The death news came to us as a shock, though we have been often hearing from him of his ill-health. Sri Varadan was a staunch theosophist, but took very active interest in anything and everything good, especially in helping the needy and the deserving. His assistance to our journal will long be cherished. We offer our heart-felt condolences, on behalf of one and all Ramana-bhakthas and Sri Ramanasramam, to the members of the family. May his soul rest in peace at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

* * *

Sri S. K. Venkatarama Iyer, a retired headmaster of the Madras Educational Service, who had settled down in the Ashram about five years ago, passed away suddenly but very peacefully on the 9th December at the age of 73. He was a quiet and unostentatious devotee of Sri Bhagavan and was very regular in his attendance at the Veda Parayana. He lived a simple life and was friendly to everybody in the Ashram. He used to take considerable interest in the boys of the Vedapatasala to whom he taught English, Tamil and Arithmetic. May his soul rest in peace at the Feet of our Master, Sri Bhagavan!

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Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha b Nanamoli Thera.

Advice to Rahula published by the Buddhist Publica tion Society.

Manual of Insight by Ledi Sayadaw.

The Discourse on the Snake Simile Tr. by Nyana ponika Thera.

Taming the Mind — *Discourses of the Buddh* published by the Buddhist Publication Society

The Greater Discourses on the Elephant Footprint Simile — A Sariputta Discourse from the Majjhima Nikaya.

The Four Nutriments of Life Tr. by Nyanaponika Thera.

The Significance of the Four Noble Truths b V. N. Gunaratna.

Renascent Hinduism by D. S. Sarma.

The Restless Quest of Modern Man by W. G. Cole

Posthumous Pieces by *Wei Wu Wei*.

Nothing happens except by Divine dispensation. One's course of conduct in this life is determined by one's *prarabdha*.

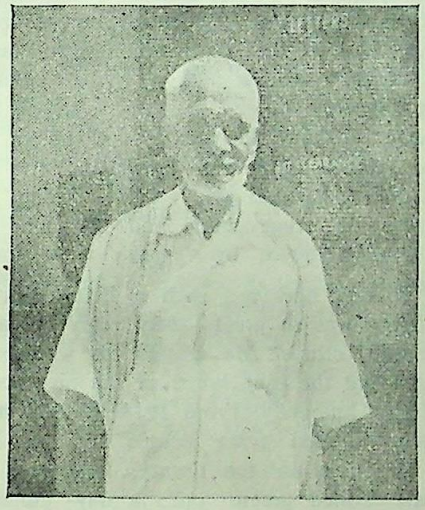
— BHAGAVAN.

INTRODUCING.....

RAJA IYER, *the Post Master*

V. RAJASUBRAMANIA IYER or Raja Iyer or simply Raja, as he is called, is one of the most well-known personalities of the Ashram. In his capacity as the Post Master of the Ashram Post Office (Sri Ramanasramam Post Office) he was extremely helpful to everybody, especially visitors from abroad to many of whom he was almost indispensible.

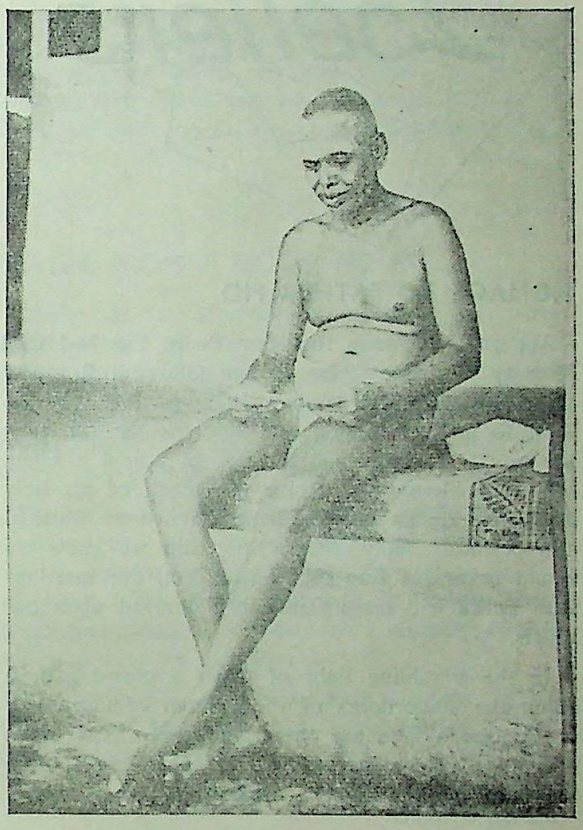
He first met Sri Bhagavan in the Virupaksha cave as early as 1911. Thereafter he used to come and see him now and then. But it was only from 1935 that he began to stay permanently at the Ashram.



Sri Raja Iyer

The circumstances by which he became a permanent inmate of the Ashram are interesting. One day he had a dream in which he saw a great yogi who ordered him to pull the punkah overhead. He obeyed him with great joy. At his next visit to Sri Bhagavan, the latter looked up as soon as he had prostrated himself before Sri Bhagavan and pointing to the punkah asked him to pull it. This came as a surprise to Raja Iyer who connected it immediately with his dream. With great joy he pulled the punkah for about five minutes when Sri Bhagavan told him to stop.

From that time onwards he continued to do some service or other in the Ashram. Very often he



Sri Bhagavan seated near the door of the Post Office, reading a letter received from a devotee.

worked with Sri Bhagavan in the kitchen. After some time he was entrusted with the work of preparing *iddlies* (rice cakes) in the morning for breakfast. In 1937 a small post office was opened inside the Ashram and Raja Iyer was appointed as the post master in charge of it. He recollects with pleasure and overwhelming joy how Sri Bhagavan himself stamped the first batch of letters to issue from the post office.

This post office has now been upgraded and removed from the Ashram premises to a larger building closeby. Consequently Raja Iyer has been relieved of his post. He is now enjoying in his old age a well-earned rest and rendering what little service he can to the Ashram.

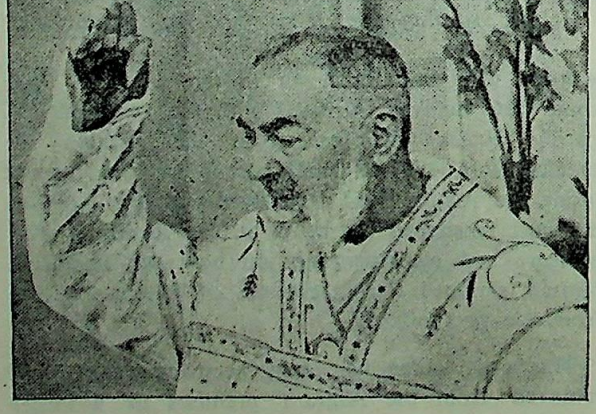


. . . . . to the EDITO

HOMAGE TO FATHER PIO

We received news that our Padre Pio had died Monday 23rd September at San Giavenni Rotondo. When we were on holiday in June this year we went to see our Padre, and saw for the last time the mortal frame which housed so radiant a Light. We were blessed to receive the touch of his holy hands and obtain his benediction. When we watched him celebrate Holy Mass, little did we know we would never see him thus again. Yet, our meetings with Padre will remain indelibly stamped upon our hearts.

In the trembling light of dawn a crowd gathers about the stout doors of the Church of Our Lady of Graces. Voices are raised in prayer. The doors open, the people stream in — a silence falls upon the congregation, then a white-haired man enters,



Father Padre Pio

leaning on the arms of two brothers. How beautiful he is ! Dressed in the gold and white vestments which priests don on Feast Days, he reverently enacts the Sacred Passion of Christ. His skin becomes translucent, irradiated by a hidden gl from within. Although advanced in earthly ye Padre Pio's face is ageless and reminds one o rose, so blooming and delicate the skin's colour The fragile fingers put a piece of cambric to d wet eyes, and as the inner communion becom more intense, sorrow stamps the celebra features. Towards the end of Mass, a serene bea is reflected in Padre Pio's face, and, as he lea the altar, crowds kneel with hands and eyes ra towards him supplicatingly. Calm, strong, Pa Pio blesses the congregation and the door clo behind him.

Dear friends, how can such a Being ever d His suffering was so great — fifty years of carry the cross for others ! He dressed his wounds hi self, and spent the long hours of the night pray for suffering humanity. From 1918 to 1929 he completely isolated from people by the Pop orders. He lived in the library, celebrated M alone, ate boiled greens once a day alone, s spoke to no one. These long years of solitude w in strong contrast to the incredibly crowded d that were to follow. Now on the 23rd Septem 1968, the holy burden was taken from him Padre Pio closed his earthly eyes. But in the hea of those who loved him, he will live on forev

GLADYS DE MEUTER, Johannesburg

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina was the subject of article in our issue of January 1967.

EDITOR

* * *

SELF AND EGO

What is gratitude ? I do not know. Is it born Love itself or do we ask the question : "Who grateful ?" Anyway whichever it is at least one your readers and surely there must be many w

want to express gratitude to you for the article "Self and Ego" in the October Quarterly. This fills a very real need. It is direct instruction set out in simple language and not over worldly. We, in the later years, are tremendously helped by the profound truths expressed in this way. Thank you. I thank you again for the lovely verses which appear from time to time under your name. I would like to think that some time they may be published in a separate booklet. God indeed appears as the Poet.

E. V. GUMMER,
New Zealand

* * *

AN IMPATIENT REQUEST

I came to your magazine through attending the lectures of Joel Goldsmith, and from the first I knew that the 'teachings' of Ramana Maharshi was what I had long been seeking. Also in sending my renewal of subscription for the next year, herewith, I feel I must write in deep appreciation of your editorship of this wonderful magazine, and in particular of your editorials and other articles — also your comments in the letter section, which I find most helpful and enlightening.

I particularly enjoy your book reviews, and amazingly perceptive answers to letters. I have now got the Radhakrishnan's "Religion in a Changing World" which I found enthralling, solely through reading about it in *The Mountain Path*. How grateful your readers must be that you were enabled to start and continue with this publication. I only wish it did not take so long to reach us in London. All my congratulations on your achievement — also on your poems!

MISS P. HARDING,
London.

It is true it takes a long time for THE MOUNTAIN PATH *to reach subscribers in other continents. But you can easily get the issues by air by remitting the additional air surcharge, details of which are given on the reverse of the contents page.*
EDITOR.

* * *

PRAYER FROM A GOOD HEART

Readers of *The Mountain Path* will be very sorry indeed to hear of your illness and will wish you a speedy recovery and an enjoyable stay in England.

My four months at Sri Ramanasramam are recalled, and the kindness of all, including your family, was greatly appreciated.

The July and October issues were received by me at almost the same time, and I find them to, if possible, surpass previous issues! The article, in the July issue, "The Maharshi's place in History" is a classic description of Sri Maharshi's teachings; could this be printed in pamphlet form?

Long may *The Mountain Path* continue in its present form and aim, and thus creating a tidal wave of love and tolerance.

RONALD HODGES,
Hants, England.

Our next issue

There may be a delay in the publication of the next issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH for April, 1969 (Vol. VI, No. 2), due to the absence of our Editor, Mr. Arthur Osborne, who is in London* for medical treatment and may not come back in time. We pray to Sri Bhagavan to shower His Gracious Blessings on him for quick recovery of health and his early return to SRI RAMANASRAMAM, the abode of our Master.

1st January, 1969,
THE MOUNTAIN PATH,
Sri Ramanasramam.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.

*His address is: c/o Mrs. Douglas, Flat 2, 13–16, Embankment Gardens, London S.W. 3

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"Unasked Thou givest ; this is Thy imperishable fame. Do not belie Thy name, Oh Arunachala !"

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 22.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala ! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala !"

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verses (UPADESA SARAM) in Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece in the fascimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

To Our Subscribers

1. The official year of the quarterly is from January to December.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

The editor is not responsible for statements and opinions contained in signed articles.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Words

கன்மம் பயன்றரல் கர்த்தன தாணையாற்
கன்மங் கடவுளோ வுந்தீபற
கன்மஞ் சடமதா லுந்தீபற.

வினையின் விளைவு விளிவுற்று வித்தாய்
வினைக்கடல் வீழ்த்திடு முந்தீபற
வீடு தரலிலை யுந்தீபற.

கருத்தனுக் காக்குநிட் காமிய கன்மங்
கருத்தைத் திருத்தியஃ துந்தீபற
கதிவழி காண்பிக்கு முந்தீபற.

1. *Action yields fruit,*
For so the Lord ordains it.
How can action be the Lord?
It is insentient.

2. *The fruit of action passes.*
But action leaves behind
Seed of further action
Leading to an endless ocean of action;
Not at all to moksha.

3. *Disinterested action*
Surrendered to the Lord
Purifies the mind and points
The way to moksha.

— Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Grace in Illurpa

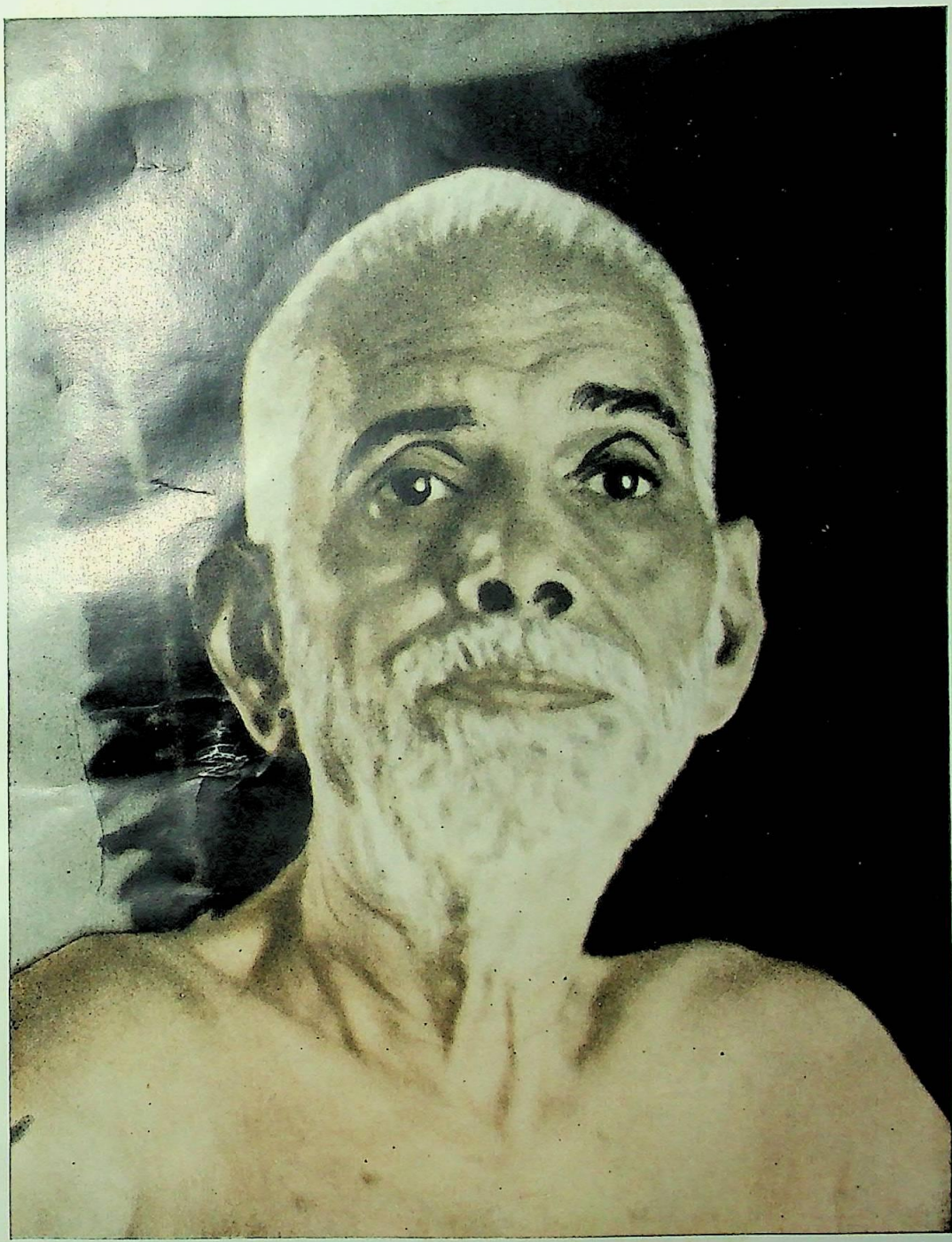
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The way to moksha.

— Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



ॐ

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. VI APRIL, 1969 No. 2

THE POWER OF COMPASSION

Editorial

COMPASSION is a tremendous force. Bhagavan indicated this when he explained, on being asked about cures which took place when ailments were brought to his notice, that it is enough for the Spiritual Master to turn his mind in any direction and "the automatic divine activity begins." This is a very important explanation. It indicates that it is not a question of one individual using certain power that he possesses to help other individuals but of a natural, impersonal harmonising force working, when unimpeded, to remove disharmonies. It was doubtless far more potent with Bhagavan than with ordinary people, but it was the same force working on the same principle ; the difference was one of degree not of kind. What is needed is to turn one's mind calmly but steadily in a certain direction, say in the direction of one who is in sickness or misfortune. This, if unimpeded, sets up a sort of current or vibration which can be felt, and what Bhagavan called "the automatic divine activity" begins. The question to be asked is not so much why some people have the ability to awaken and harness this power as why most people have not. Perhaps most people do not sit still long enough (mentally still) to allow this power to awaken in them at all but fritter it away in perpetual distraction. Perhaps also, of those who are awake enough to generate it, most impede its flow by constant interference. It should be, as Bhagavan said, 'automatic' ; to try to direct its flow can impede it.

That is why I prefer the term 'compassion' to 'love' for this force. The term 'love' is more apt to include an element of possessiveness, and possessiveness, being egoistic, impedes the working of the power-current. All egoism does. That includes, of course, desire, even the desire to help or cure. When Bhagavan was asked about Christ's miracles he replied with the counter-question : "Did he think it was he who was performing them ?" We have the answer in Christ's saying : "Of my own self I can do nothing." Many healers have found that the moment they try to appropriate the power or to will it into existence or say for whom or in what way it shall be used it disappears.

This was the secret (an open secret, for he offered it to all) of the extraordinary cures obtained by the late Joel Goldsmith. I found the following passage in confirmation of it in a Taoist book written as far back as 1914 and sent it to Joel, who was delighted. " . . . if meditation is aimed at curing an illness the practiser should forget all about the thought of curing it, and if it is for improving health he should forget all about the idea of improvement, because when mind and objects are forgotten everything will be void and the result thus achieved will be the proper one . . . If the thoughts or curing an illness and of improving health are clung to, the mind will be stirred and no result can be expected." (By the Taoist Master Yin Shih Tsu, from his book published in 1914, quoted by Charles Luk in *The Secrets of Chinese Meditation*, p. 180, Rider & Co.).

Furthermore, it is generally recognized by people who have the power either to influence or to foretell events that they should never use such powers in their own interests. If they do, the powers do not work and may even abandon them. On the other hand, a spiritual man who is quite unattached to life or death often does have foreknowledge of the time of his death, since this is free from desire and cannot harm him but may be convenient.

The question arises whether or why this power should work in the particular direction one has in mind if one does not try to force it. The answer is that it need not and that some subtlety of mind is needed in order, on the one hand, to canalise the power without, on the other, nullifying it by self-will. It works in a general way, though perhaps not so specifically, without being canalised at all. All that is needed is to remove the obstructions caused by egoism and allow a free flow to what Bhagavan called the 'automatic divine activity'. It will be remembered that when the Pandava brothers were spending one year in concealment and their enemies discussed h to find them, the wise Vidura declared t there would be signs enough where saintly Yudhishthira lived. "The rains be regular there. The land will have excellent harvest . . . the flowers will sm sweeter for his presence, the fruits will more juicy and more luscious, the cows yield sweeter milk where Yudhisht dwells." (*Mahabharata*, p. 288, by Kam Subramaniam, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

An example, though perhaps on a sm scale, of this responsiveness of nature to harmony of heaven is to be seen in such phenomenon as 'green fingers', or in healing touch or in the natural good fort which attends one who refrains from fret and trying to force his own pattern events. The more unobstructed by self the power remains the more it will flow

On the other hand it is natural to use s canalisation when cases demanding c passion are brought before one. It is nec sary, even while doing so, to retain a tain aloofness so as to prevent the canal tion turning into obstruction. The comes to mind of Moses who, on one o sion, struck a rock in order to provid flow of water for the parched Israelites the wilderness but brought the divine w on himself by claiming that it was he had done it. All this may be personified, actually it is an impersonal force whic vitiated by self-will.

Another complication is that the po may take various forms, dependent o man's nature and temperament, like flowing into various bottles. It need appear as healing or removal of fortunes ; it may appear, for instance, as ability to write or speak or carry con tion silently. It will be remembered St. Paul listed the various forms in w divine inspiration was liable to come the saints, implying that those in whom took one form should not envy those whom it took another.

1969

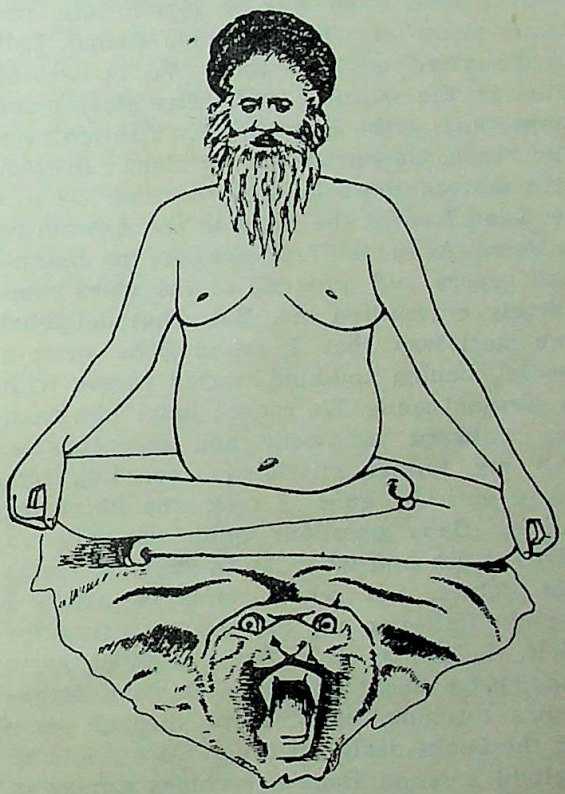
MORE ABOUT NAGA BABA

By
JAGANATH CHATTOPADYAYA

IN India there is no dearth of naked sadhus roaming the country. They are generally called Naga Sannyasins. Naga Baba about whom a short note was written by S. P. Mukherjee in the second issue of *The Mountain Path*, April, 1964, was one; but he was quite a unique sadhu whose previous history and antecedent are shrouded in mystery. I would like to say a little more about him. His few followers used to refer to him as Yogeswara Srimat Digambara Paramahansaji. Physically he was a tall well built sadhu whose age was difficult to determine. Many presumed that he must have been a Punjabi. He spoke Hindi but in general spoke very little. In 1921 or 1922 Naga Baba was first discovered by my friend, the late Sri Radha Raman Lall, vice chairman of Rishra Municipality, District Hooghly, West Bengal. Sri Lall built him a small Ashram at Rishra. Naga Baba consented to live there for some years, but from 1926 he roamed about the country. In 1950 we found him again in Puri, at Girnaribanta near Lokenath. Here a small Ashram was built for him on a sand hill, a short distance from the sea and Baba stayed there for the rest of his life, that is till August 24, 1961, at 4-45 a.m.

Of all the persons I have come across in my life, I have not met with any one whose very life seemed to be so clearly an embodiment of Advaita Vedanta. My contact with Baba was very slight. I met him only twice in my life, the first time was on February 8, 1958 and the second on March 10, 1958. On both occasions my friend, the late Radha Raman Lall, was chiefly instrumental in effecting the contact.

On the first occasion, after hearing from my friend in detail about Sri Baba, I went alone on foot in the afternoon to meet him at his Ashram at Girnari Banta, near Lokenath, Puri. The serene and tranquil atmosphere of the place not only filled my mind with joy and peace but also helped to turn it inward. I arrived between two and three in the afternoon and was asked to wait for some time as Baba would be coming from his little room shortly to take his seat on the outside porch. When he did so I approached him and made my obeisance to him. On this occasion I did not have much talk with Baba. Being always an ardent lover of Advaita Vedanta from an early age, I simply asked him whether it would be possible for me to attain the goal of Advaita Vedanta, namely the realization of my true Self. To this question Baba said that, engrossed as I



Sri Naga Baba

was in the objects of the senses, it was rather premature for me to talk about the realization of the Self. Although a little depressed by his somewhat discouraging answer, I could not bring myself to leave the place then and there, but I was told peremptorily to leave. My first visit to Baba thus came to an ignoble end and it left me wondering what could be the reason for his dismissing me in such a curt fashion.

The second and last time I had personal contact with Baba was on March 10th, the same year. My friend Radha Raman Lall accompanied me this time. We arrived at Puri in the morning and, after staying for some time at the Bharata Seva Ashram near the beach, we started out for Baba's Ashram and arrived there in the afternoon. On this occasion I spent the night in the Ashram as a guest. As on the first occasion, the charming repose and quietude of the place completely enraptured me. But what delighted me most was that I found Baba quite a genial, benign and kind hearted person with a pleasant smile. We cannot judge him from his outward behaviour and eccentricities. All my former misgivings regarding him were entirely gone. I took the liberty of asking Baba questions quite naturally. I did not ask him what lay in store for me in the future, but what course of action I should follow in my attempt to realize the Self. I had by this time acquired some knowledge about Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's teaching, having gone through some of the books dealing with it. To my intense delight I found Baba's teachings similar in all essential points. Naga Baba emphatically declared that it was a grievous mistake, nay a sin, for me to identify myself with the body. The body is jada or an inert object, whereas man in his essential nature is a spirit who controls the body. Like Maharshi, Naga Baba did not prescribe any particular technique such as breath control or yogic practices. What is of paramount importance is that we must always exercise discrimination in distinguishing the real from the unreal, the Atma from the anatma ; this brings us naturally to the Supreme necessity of the Maharshi's Self-enquiry. I am not this body, nor the senses, nor the mi but I am the ever-present witness, the Se the Seer of this phenomenal world — w remains the same in the sleeping, dream a waking states. As mentioned before, Na Baba was as if the living personification Advaita Vedanta. A realized Self who w entirely devoid of any kind of body sen whatsoever, who regarded the physical bo as a veritable burden and therefore used go about naked totally ignoring it, Ba was an uncompromising Advaitin. incidentally mentioned the name of Rama Maharshi, not knowing whether he h seen him or not, and to my great delig Naga Baba said Maharshi was a gre sadhu, a Rishi as of old. No account of Na Baba would be complete without mention some of his important teachings. Some the cardinal points have been compiled Bengali by Sri Raman Lall in a book entitled 'Vedanta Bodh' published fro Advaita Brahma Ashram, Girnari Ban Puri.

To a question put to Baba whether it wo be right to meditate on the thought "I a Atma" (*aham Brahmasmi*) while I rem in the body he said : "There is no other w We must first meditate on consciousne (*chit*) which represents the mind by *jna* and by the fire of discrimination (*jnanag* the mind will be burnt out and only th will the Self be revealed. This Self beyond mind, speech and sight (*avan manasagocharam*)." This teaching of Na Baba is just like what Sri Bhagavan said "This Self investigation annihilates th mind and itself gets destroyed eventual just as a stick used to stir the funeral py is itself finally burnt." (See *Collected Wor of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 19, 2nd Edition).

According to Baba's teaching, it is a mi take to take the dream body for the act in a dream. Both these things — the drea and the dream body — are transitory a therefore unreal. Had it not been so, the fa of the dream could not have come to o memory. This proves that it is not the bod that is the seer or the doer of all actions a dream ; it is the ever-present Self, th Witness which is consciousness itself. Th

imaginary dream-world is erected by the Self by its own memory or *tejas* and therefore the Self in the dream world is called *tejas* Atma. In exactly the same way the ever present Self, which remains as a witness, creates this waking world also. He simply remains in the background (in the Maharshi's words, like a screen in a cinema show) to witness the drama that is being played on this waking stage. In reality the dream world and the waking world are the same. Only in the former case it is of short duration while in the latter it is of longer duration and common to all and has therefore empirical or practical (*vyavaharika*) value.

According to Naga Baba's teachings it is not at all necessary in order to attain salvation or *moksha* to stick to any particular sadhana or mode of action. Sadhana is necessary only for the removal of ignorance which is the outcome of maya or nescience. This maya produces three positive defects : darkness (*mala*), distortion (*vikshepa*) and veiling (*avarana*). For the removal of darkness Baba prescribed disinterested good action (*nishkama subha karma*), for the removal of distortion he recommended meditation on either *saguna* (qualified) or *nirguna* (unqualified) Brahma, and for the dispelling of this veil or *avarana* he insisted upon the identification of the Self with Brahman. *Moksha* or Liberation in respect of the Self is itself meaningless. The Self is ever free. Bondage for the Self is meaningless. *Moksha* is therefore not a positive gain. It is only the shedding of the mistaken notion of individuality, a restoration of its own intrinsic nature. It is quite apparent from what has been stated that Naga Baba's teachings are an exact echo of those of Sri Maharshi.

SELF

The Self is only Being
Not being this or that
Just Be
Pure Being
Ending illusion.
Reality is Being
Being — Consciousness
To know that is to be That
In the heart-transcending thought.
Surrender to the Supreme Being
Destroys all thought of "I" and "Mine"
Thus Immortality.
The Supreme Being
The one ultimate cause of creation
Manifests as many
Non-existent from Him
To destroy the ego and Be as the Self
Is supreme attainment.

A NEW APPROACH TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION

ARTHUR OSBOR

IT is usual to divide up a study of comparative religion into the various religions, allotting a chapter to each, but that is not the only mode of approach. It would also be possible to divide it according to subject, allowing, for instance, one chapter for theistic and non-theistic religions, another for proselytising and non-proselytising, and so on. This would have the advantage of bringing out more clearly the affinities between the religions by showing the groupings into which they fall.

Let us see, for instance, how Christianity would fare in such a study. In the chapter on theistic and non-theistic religions it would be classed with Judaeism and Islam as contrasted with Buddhism and Taoism (Hinduism would stand apart as containing both possibilities). In the chapter on proselytism and its absence, on the other hand, Christianity would be grouped with Buddhism and Islam as contrasted with Hinduism and Judaeism. In the division into world-renouncing and world-sanctifying religions still another grouping would arise, with Christianity and Buddhism on the one side and Judaeism, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism on the other.

The first division that would have to be taken up would be between the horizontal and vertical modes of religion to which I referred in my recent article on 'Comparative Religion as a University Discipline'.[1] This, however, does not involve any contrast between the religions but rather a definition of the very nature of religion (which is, after all, a necessary starting point) since every religion contains both modes. Horizontally every religion is (as the word *religio* implies) a binding together of a community into a pattern of life. This involves the organization of life, worship, society, education, etc. in such a way as to facilitate conformity with religion and i pede its rejection. Vertically it is an as to Beatitude by those few in each co munity who see the possibility and fol it.

Now let us consider the division theistic and non-theistic religions. The th Semitic religions and Zoroastrianism theistic, while Buddhism, Taoism, C fucianism, Jainism and Shinto non-theistic. Hinduism contains both po bilities. This at once faces one with realization that on the whole the Wes peoples tend to theism and the Easter non-theism. The question has to be car farther, however, by the subdivisio theistic religions into monotheistic and p theistic. By and large, the Aryan relig — Hindu, Graeco-Roman and Scandina — are polytheistic while the Semiti Judaeism, Christianity and Islam — monotheistic. This consideration, howe has to be modified by the reminder t through Buddhist, the non-theistic form Hinduism has overspread most of A while through Christianity Semitic mo theism has dominated the West.

Both these facts need commenting on connection with the Christian dominatio the West, it is to be noted that Christian affected by the cultural heritage it absorbed, has remained less rigorously exclusively monotheistic than Judaeism Islam. Neither of these religions wo accept the Catholic doctrine of the Tri or veneration of the Virgin and saints true monotheism. From the other side, spread of Buddhism, that is of the t theistic mode of Hinduism, through the reminds us that Hinduism escapes all t categories, including in its scope the p

[1] Published in Jan. '69 issue, p. 3.

theism of the ordinary worshipper, the monotheism of the bhakta and the non-theism of the advaitin. And indeed, it is significant that the Hindu has never called it 'Hinduism' but simply 'Sanatana Dharma' the Eternal Religion. In general it may be said that monotheism concentrates on the Supreme Oneness of Being, polytheism on the endless possibilities and countless forms within that One, and non-theism on the Stillness transcending alike the affirmation of being and its negation.

Let us next consider the division into proselytising and non-proselytising religions. It has often been said that all religions seek to convert others to their view and condemn those who hold different views ; but this is glib. It simply does not accord with the facts. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are proselytising religions, Hinduism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaeism, Confucianism and Jainism are not. There are two possible attitudes that one can take up with regard to other religions. One is : "My religion is a true path and suitable to me ; yours may also be a true path and suitable to you." The other is : "My religion is the best and therefore I have the moral duty of bringing it to your notice and doing what I can to induce you to follow it." The former attitude is the older. The latter, when deprived of understanding and allied with ignorance, becomes : "my religion is true and therefore yours is false and threatens you with spiritual destruction, therefore I have the moral duty of doing whatever I can to turn you away from yours and, in your own good, of inducing or forcing you to accept mine."

The question is vitiated by the general modern acceptance of the gratuitous postulate of progress. In spiritual life there is no progress. Religions do not progress, they decline. Every religion with a known historical origin was at its highest at that origin and has since declined. Any Christian who claims to have progressed beyond Christ *ipso facto* ceases to be a Christian. People know this and yet such is the allure of a false doctrine that they talk as though the opposite were true.

The same process of decline can be observed in religions which do not stem from a known historical origin. When Krishna proclaimed the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna he told him : "I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan, he to Manu and Manu to Ikshvaku. Thus handed down the royal sages knew it until it was lost through long lapse of time."[1] This is what happens spiritually : not progress but the opposite ; the wisdom is lost 'through long lapse of time'. And then what happens ? This also Krishna explained : "When righteousness decays and unrighteousness (adharma) prevails I manifest Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil and for the establishment of dharma (righteousness), I take birth from age to age."[2] And indeed, that is just what we see happening in the history of every religion : a long, gradual decline redressed periodically by a powerful spiritual readjustment (as, for instance, with the monastic revivals in Christendom or the Sufi orders in Islam). The readjustment, however, is normally on a lower level, so that it marks on the one hand a stabilisation but on the other a step downwards.

A point may be reached in the decline of a religion when its rehabilitation is hardly feasible. There is a providence, what might be called a 'divine economy' watching over the affairs of men, and when a religion has gone too far in its decline it is swept away and replaced by another. This brings us back to the question of proselytism. It is no question of the achievements of a civilization, for this fate can befall even the highest civilizations, as when that of Ancient Greece was superseded by Christianity, of Egypt first by Christianity and then by Islam, of Persia by Islam, and that of China greatly modified by Buddhism.

In the fifth century B.C. such a decline had already set in throughout the lands east of India. Hindu colonies were being established in Indonesia, Cambodia and other places. However, Hinduism has such a strong and closely knit dharma or horizontal pattern that it cannot well be adapted to different conditions of life ; it would have

to be adopted as a complete whole. An alternative solution was provided when Buddhism arose as a sort of 'export variety' of Hinduism, supplying the necessary doctrine without the whole social and legal structure which in India went with it. That explains why Buddhism faded out in India but became established in the lands to the north, south and east, thus becoming the world's first proselytising religion. In India it was not needed because the sanatana dharma was still spiritually vigorous ; in those other countries there was a vaccuum to be filled.

The second proselytising religion arose when Christianity was needed to replace the spiritually bankrupt Graeco-Roman, Celtic and Scandinavian religions. In this case also it was not needed in its homeland where the indigenous tradition was still strong. Islam was the third proselytising religion, replacing those of Egypt, Arabia and Persia.

The question of proselytism calls for at least a reference to that of intolerance. The adherent of a non-proselytising religion has no difficulty in tolerating others. It never occurs to him not to. The fact that his religion provides a valid path for him is never taken to imply that yours does not for you. In the sanatana dharma a Hindu who worships God in the form of Krishna never thinks of opposing another who worships God in the form of Rama ; why then should he oppose one who worships God in the form of Christ ? However, proselytisation, by its very nature, implies a claim to superiority. And in fact the proselytising religions only arose when and where there was an effete religion which needed to be replaced, so that at the outset they had actual as well as theoretical superiority. All three of them went out with a mission to teach the ignorant or convert the heathen. This was a necessary part of their equipment. Without it they would never have had the incentive to carry their message over land and sea among peoples often ill disposed to receive it. Nor would they have carried conviction if they had. Their difficulty arises in later ages when they are claiming a superiority which no longer exists. Having lost the inherent spiritual potency which made t superior, they have to find a spur superiority in an allegedly superior doctr Actually, every true doctrine is an adeq instrument for spiritual achievement none can be more than that, so there is such thing as an inherently superior doctr

It is a striking testimony to Buddh that even during its rapid expansion never thrust itself on people by violence persecution, as the other two proselyti religions did. Even in Buddhism, howe intellectual tolerance is not common requires real understanding, and in no r gion is understanding a common commod

I have written at some length about p selytism, even though touching only on salient features ; let us now consider anot difference of approach among the religio that between a world-renouncing an world sanctifying religion. Seeing world so largely given over egoism, exploitation and self-indu ence, I can adopt either of two attitude it : I can renounce it, lumping it with flesh and the devil' as unholy, or I dedicate myself to the high endeavou hold at least my little fragment of accordance with divine justice. Christia and Buddhist take the former path and by nature world-renouncing relig When the rich young man asks Christ w he should do he is told to give his prop to the poor and become a mendicant ; w Rahula asks Buddha for his heritage h given a begging bowl. A Muslim, on other hand, is told to pay the poor When slaves ask Christ their duty they told to obey their masters ; in Islam ma are told to free slaves. Neither in Christia nor Buddhism was an organization of and religion established by the founder his followers ; each continued an Testament' of as much as had not b abrogated from the previous religion. might be said that Christ's mission on e was too short to allow for a complete or nization of life, but such things are decided by chance. If more time had b needed it would have been available. A that would not explain the parallel of

Buddha who taught for close on forty years and yet established no organization of life for the laity, only for the monastic community.

Judaeism and Islam are world-stabilising religions. Every Jew is expected to marry and work for his living, even though he may be a rabbi. A Muslim too. It is expressly stated in the Quran : " No monasticism in Islam ". As one of our contributors pointed out, the Christian fear of ' the world, the flesh and the devil ' does not apply in Islam, since the first two of these are not regarded as enemies but as bounties created by God to be used wisely and in due measure. Hinduism is a world-stabilising religion, but the institution of the sadhu and the sannyasin gives it the possibility of renunciation also, as a sort of safety-valve which Judaeism and Islam lack.

The position of Christianity is particularly remarkable in this respect because it seems to have made a complete volte face. At its origin it was completely world-renouncing. Its followers were told that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, they were to take no thought for the morrow, they were to pay taxes to an alien and irreligious government. In modern times, however, Christianity, especially Protestant Christianity, though Catholicism also, has gone to the opposite extreme and become preeminently the religion of outer organization, practical work and social service. In this connection the Islamic interpretation may be mentioned as an interesting sidelight. That is that Christianity remained incomplete when Christ was taken from his disciples (as he himself told them), and that the " many things " which he still had to explain to them included also the outer organization of life. This was added by Islam and ought to have been accepted by Christians. Since it was not they were driven to hammer out such an organization for themselves in later centuries.

Let us also see how the question of renunciation or sanctification of the world interweaves with that of proselytism. Of the three proselytising religions two — Buddhism and Christianity — are world-renouncing, while the third — Islam — is world sanctifying. This involves an important difference in procedure. A world-renouncing religion can infiltrate invisibly until even a powerful organization like the Roman Empire crumbles before it ; a world-sanctifying religion on the other hand has to build an entire civilization with its civil and criminal law and whole framework of life. This involves breaking up any old order that may exist and replacing it by a new one from the ground up. Therefore Islam had to destroy the Persian Empire by war before it could replace it, whereas Christianity could build up the New Roma gradually within the crumbling framework of the old.

These are only fragmentary suggestions for the study of comparative religion, but they should suffice to show that it is possible to group such a study round central themes and not merely treat each religion as a separate case. Before leaving the subject, there are three cases of recognition of an alien religion which are particularly difficult and therefore merit special consideration : that is for a Jew to recognize Christianity, for a Christian to recognize Islam and for a Buddhist to recognize Hinduism. All three of these recognitions are, however, possible, as I shall show.

A Jew who recognizes Christianity invites the retort : " That means that you recognize Christ to have been the Messiah, so why don't you become a Christian ? " His reply can be that he awaits a Messiah whose kingdom will be of this world also, as Christ's is to be at his Second Coming, and that that is therefore the consummation which both he and the Christian await.

A Christian who recognizes Mohammed to have been a genuine prophet is faced with the Quranic claim to be the completion of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and may be similarly challenged to explain why he does not become a Muslim. Without descending, as most Christians do, to the low level of denying another religion in order to affirm his own, he can say that Islam has indeed constructed a world-sanctifying religion but that for those who renounce the world, the

flesh and the devil, as Christ bade, this is not needed. They can continue to follow the path of renunciation that Christ laid down for them and that remains valid so long as Christs kingdom is not of this world. Only in order to justify this claim he should indeed be a world renouncer. It is a path for the monastic rather than the lay follower and would incidentally explain a paradox in Islam : that on the one hand the Quran states : " No monasticism in Islam " ; while on the other it states that the Christians are the closest to the Muslims because they have monks among them.

A Buddhist who recognizes Hinduism may feel called upon to explain why then Buddhism broke away from it and became a separate religion instead of remaining one of its many schools. The answer to that has been indicated already. A Buddhist can admit the doctrinal traditions which Buddha neither denied nor confirmed but declared that he is not concerned with them but with a world-wide religion stemming from the Enlightened One. To seek grounds for attacking a religion whose long tradition of spiritual achievement speaks louder than any doctrine would obviously be a regrettable policy. As Christ said, " By their fruits you shall know them " ; and the fruit of religion is Realization.

The Hindu attitude to Buddhist also calls for consideration. On the whole it has been one of recognition. The basic doctrine of Buddhism is anatta, no-ego, which is the same as advaita — not that the ego will not continue after death but that it is not now. The possibility of following a formal path to a formal but transient heaven is recognized in both religions, but the possibility of transcending this is also recognized. Some Hindus have indeed given an unfavourable interpretation to Buddhism, but this was at a time when Buddhism was trying to replace Hinduism in India, and that was not its dharma ; its dharma was to carry the sanatana dharma in a new form to the world outside India.

In general, if the followers of any religion compare another with their own they are likely to do so from the viewpoint of their own and will therefore find the ot inferior. If one wishes to compare religi one should be willing to regard each fr its own viewpoint. If not one can treat th all respectfully from a distance. To sugg that all the people who happen to h been brought up in one's own religion rightly guided and all those who happe have been brought up in any other misguided does not speak highly for co intelligence. And yet a man's own vie point is usually so natural to him that i not at all easy to see beyond it. For insta a Christian once wrote a book entitled ' Buddha, the Prophet and the Christ ' co sidering the claims of each of these to considered a Divine Incarnation and ca down in favour of the Christ. In his exa nation he was trying to be impartial an a large extent was ; where he was not partial was in taking the conception of Divine Saviour, which is the very esse of Christianity, as his starting-point would probably never occur to a Chris that any other starting point for a co parison was possible. But if a Muslim written the book he would probably entitled it ' The Gospels, the Tripitaka the Quran ' and shown that of the three Quran had the best claim to be consid a revealed scripture. That would have his starting point for comparison. Buddhist had written the book it m have been called : ' The Sermon on Mount, the Shariat and the Noble Eight Path ' and argued which of the three sh ed most clearly the path from darkne light, from death to immortality. T beneath an appearance of impartiality without any deliberate partiality, eac the three would have picked out that as of doctrine which was most develope his own religion and on the basis of proclaimed his religion the best.

From the Hindu viewpoint, compar between the religions requires referenc the doctrine of Avatars. An Avatar Divine Descent or Incarnation for the pose of " protecting the good, destro evil and establishing right." Many such recorded but ten are listed in the Pur

as principal Avatars. The Seventh of these was Rama and the Eighth Krishna. The Tenth is the Avatar of the White Horse who is to bring about the closing of this cycle and the opening of the next and is identified with the Second Coming of Christ in the West and Maitreya Buddha in the East. It is recognized that the Ninth has appeared already but there is no unanimity as to his identity. Most Hindus identify him with Buddha, some with Christ. My own conviction is that, as I have explained elsewhere, he is the twofold appearance of Buddha for the East and Christ for the West, represented by the dual sign of Pisces. It is noteworthy that the two currents (Buddhism in the East and in terms of non-theism and Christianity in the West and in terms of theism) performed the same function of introducing a new religion based on the love and compassion of its Founder to supplement the ancient tradition, Semitic in the West and Aryan in the East, and that both proved unnecessary in their doctrinal homeland but essential in the lands beyond.

Many matters have been touched on in this article; let us end by saying that at this time when most people in the world have rejected religion altogether and a fervent few are ardently seeking spiritual guidance beyond the ordinary level of religion, to confuse the issue by praising one religion at the cost of another is worse than futile. It is culpable folly which can benefit only the adversary.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

85. Like the simpleton bestriding
A crocodile to cross the flood
Are those who pamper the body
And at the same time claim
To search for the living Self.

86. Forgetting Being-Awareness-Bliss
Too subtle for speech and thought
And toiling and moiling for the gross body
Is like treading up and down a tall, steep sweep
To water coarse, useless grass.

87. Forgetting the grim harm the false world brings
And trusting to its glittering goodness
Is to hug a bear afloat
As a raft to cross the deep,
Only to be crushed and drowned
In the sea of births.

88. When will he find peace, the fool
Who deems the body and the world
As permanent and clings to them?
Only when this folly leaves him
And he trusts and like a limpet clings
To the living truth within.
Then indeed his bliss is permanent.

89. Why do people call me learned?
What is the mark of one who truly knows?
The knowledge that all garnered knowledge
Of things is empty ignorance
And that true knowledge is the search
For the Knower.

THE RAMA GITA

SWAMI EKATMANAND

The Rama Gita or the *Song of Sri Rama* consisting of sixty-two melodious stanzas is an extract of the seventh chapter of the fifth canto of the *Adhyatma Ramayana*, a work forming part of the Brahmanda Purana. Though short it contains the essence of the non-dual (Advaita) philosophy and we therefore publish it here for the benefit of the readers of *The Mountain Path*.

To Rama, the Lord of the line of Raghu, whose body is dark and beautiful like the blue lotus, who has Sita seated on his left, and who carries the mighty arrow and the elegant bow in His hand, I make this obeisance.

I bow down to Lord Hari bearing the name of Rama, who is beyond all causes, to whose magic sway the entire universe with all the gods beginning with Brahma and all the demons is subject, through whose existence everything seems quite real, as does the illusion of a serpent in a rope and whose feet are the only raft for those who wish to cross this ocean of SAMSARA *(relative existence).*



1. Mahadeva (Siva) said :

After that excellent descendent of Raghu (Rama) had established, for the supreme good of the world, the unequalled fame of the Ramayana, He conducted Himself in the manner of the foremost royal sages of yore.

2. When Lakshmana, the generous son of Sumitra, questioned Rama now and then, he narrated to him ancient and elevating stories. He narrated the story of the r ligent king named Nriga, who, by the cu of a Brahmana, was born as a low creatu

3. Once, finding Rama seated in a solit place, Lakshmana who had gained purity mind humbly prostrated himself with gr

devotion before him, whose lotus feet had been fondled by Ramā (a name for Lakshmi whose incarnation was Sita), and said :

4. " O Soul of great wisdom ! You are pure Consciousness. You are the Self of all embodied beings, their overlord. You have no form of your own, but you are perceived by those who possess the eye of wisdom and are ever attached bee-like to your lotus-feet and also by those who associate with them.

5. O Lord, I seek refuge at your lotus-feet which are meditated upon by Yogis and which bestow Liberation from *samsara*. Pray teach me how I may easily and quickly cross over the boundless sea of ignorance."

6. Upon hearing these words of Lakshmana Rama, the best of kings, the remover of the distresses of the suppliant, the man of clear intellect, imparted to him the supreme knowledge taught by the *Sruti* (Vedas) for removing the darkness of ignorance.

7. (Rama said) :

" First of all one should carry out the duties prescribed for one's caste and stage of life and thereby acquire purity of mind. Later on one should give them up and proceed to acquire the necessary qualifications. Then, in order to realize one's Self, he should earnestly seek a realized Guru.

8. It is admitted that action is the cause of the birth of the body. Actions are, in the case of those who are swayed by attachment, of two kinds, namely agreeable and disagreeable, righteous and unrighteous. These result in further embodiment and further performance of action and thus *samsara* goes on revolving like a wheel.

9. The root cause of this is nothing but nescience (ignorance). Therefore the destruction of the latter alone is prescribed by the Vedic injunctions (for its destruction). Only knowledge (of Brahman) is capable of destroying it, not action which is the result of it. For it is declared that these two, knowledge and action, are opposed to each other.

10. Action does not destroy ignorance ; nor does it reduce (one's) attachment. It generates more action attended with more evil. And that again brings in the unavoidable *samsara*. Hence an intelligent person should take to the path of enquiry and knowledge.

11-12. (Here an objection is raised) : Surely action is enjoined by the Vedas in the same way as knowledge is prescribed for attaining the goal of life. Action is insisted upon in the case of one who is alive (i.e., so long as one is alive) and it is an auxiliary to knowledge. The scriptures regard non-performance of action as sin. Therefore it (action) should always be performed by one who seeks Liberation. (To this the following reply is made) : But certainly knowledge being independent and capable of producing a definite result (i.e., Liberation) does not stand in need of help even in the form of a thought.

13. (Objection) : It is not so, for, just as a sacrifice which produces a definite result (i.e., the heavenly life), very much needs accessories (for its performance), even so, it is laid down that knowledge produces Liberation only when it is attended with prescribed action.

14. Some false disputants argue in this manner. But this (their argument) is incorrect as it is contrary to observed facts. Activity increases as a result of the belief that the body is the Self, while knowledge, it is well-known, is the outcome of the extinction of the ego.

15. Wisdom which results from extremely pure and subtle knowledge is said to culminate in Self-knowledge (*Atmavritti*). While action arises from the various instruments of action, wisdom destroys all of them.

16. A wise man should, therefore, give up all actions, since wisdom and action which are mutually opposed cannot co-exist. Leaving aside all activities of the sense-

organs, he must be ever intent on the quest of the self.

17. As long as there is the idea 'I am the body' etc., as a result of *maya* (nescience), so long is one bound by the prescribed duties. But when one has rejected everything as 'not this' on the strength of the scriptural saying and known (realized) the Supreme Self, he should give up action.

18. When true knowledge which destroys the distinction between the Supreme Self and one's Self shines brightly within oneself, then and there *maya*, the cause of one's *samsara*, along with its instruments, completely disappears.

19. When once it (the *maya*) is annihilated, with the help of the scriptural conclusions, how can it again become the cause of action? As only the pure, non-dual wisdom then remains nescience does not rise again.

20. If *maya* is destroyed and does not come into existence again, how can there be the thought 'I am the doer?' Therefore knowledge is independent and does not require anything else; it is quite sufficient for Liberation.

21. The Taittiriya Sruti (Upanishad) has clearly and graciously declared (the need for) the renunciation of all actions which have been praised so much. The Vajasaneya Sruti (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) has also said: "This much is enough (for Liberation)". Thus knowledge is the means of Liberation, not action.

22. (The example of) sacrifice has been advanced by you (the opponent) to show that (action is) on the same plane as knowledge, but this example is not correct. For sacrifice is accomplished with the help of many accessories and the result is different (in the case of each kind of sacrifice), but knowledge is entirely different.

23. It is well-known that the thought 'I am indeed a sinner (because of my acts of omission)' occurs only to the ignorant person who does not know the Self, not to the perceiver of Truth. Therefore acts prescribed by the scriptures should be renounced formally by the wise who have realized the actionless Self.

24. A man of faith whose mind is pure realizes the identity of the individual self (*jiva*) and the (real) Self (by hearing) the saying 'That thou art' or by the grace of the Guru and thereby attains bliss and remains unshaken like the Meru mountain.

25. In order to understand the import of the scriptural text (That thou art) it is first necessary to know the meaning of the words (in it). 'That' and 'thou' denote the Supreme Self and the individual self respectively. The word 'art' establishes their identity.

26. Rejecting the difference between the innermost (Self) and the obvious self (the *jiva*) and taking into consideration only their common characteristic of consciousness one should, through the method of *lakshana* (secondary meaning), realize the Self and become non-dual.

27. As they ('That' and 'thou') are identical the method of *lakshana* known as '*jahati*' (or *jahad*) cannot apply to them. Nor can the method called '*ajahati*' (or *ajahad*) apply as they are opposed to each other. The method known as *bhaga lakshana*[1] must be applied to the words 'That' and 'thou' as in the case of the words 'this' and 'he' in the sentence

[1] There are three kinds of *lakshana* or implied meaning, the *jahati*, the *ajahati* and the *bhaga*. The first is that in which one of the terms has to give up its primary meaning. For example, 'village on the Ganges' does not mean a village situated in the middle of the stream but a village situated on the bank of the Ganges. The second kind is that in which the primary meaning is retained, but something is supplied to make it clear, as, for example, in the sentence 'The red runs' meaning 'the red horse runs'. In the third kind each of the terms has to give up part of its connotation. For instance, in the sentence 'This is he', the associations of time and place are eliminated and the person referred to is retained. Similarly in the Vedic dictum 'That thou art' the contradictory factors of remoteness and immediacy, omniscience and nescience, associated with 'That' and 'thou' respectively should be given up and pure consciousness which is common to both retained.

'This is he (that person)', as it is unobjectionable.

28. The unreal body which is a quinquepartite[2] product of the five elements of water, etc., is the centre of experience of happiness and misery which are the results of actions. It has a beginning and an end. It comes into existence as a result of primordial action. It is the gross limiting adjunct of the Self.

29. The subtle body is made up of the five undivided elements, together with the mind, the intellect, the ten sense-organs (five sensory and five motor) and the (five) *pranas* (the vital forces) and is an auxiliary centre of experience of happiness, etc., for the experiencer (*bhokta*). It is another adjunct of the Self. The wise have realized this.

30. The beginningless and indefinable *Maya* or *Pradhana* is a separate causal body. As the Self stands apart from the various adjuncts it should be realized by itself gradually.

31. Just as a crystal (appears to possess the colour of the object which is in contact with it), even so the Self appears to have the shapes of the sheaths with which It is in contact. A thorough enquiry, however, reveals that It (the Self) is unattached, formless, unborn and non-dual.

32. The concepts (activities) of the intellect made up of the three *gunas*[3] are also observed in different states like dream, etc. These states are mutually contradictory and unreal from the standpoint of the eternal, Supreme, Absolute and auspicious Brahman.

33. Owing to the mixing up of the body, the sense-organs, the vital airs, the mind and the conscious Self, the mental concepts constantly change. As long as these concepts characterised by ignorance and produced by nescience (*tamas*) continue to exist, so long does this relative existence remain.

34. After renouncing everything as 'not this' in accordance with the (scriptural) conclusion and tasting with the heart (i.e., inwardly) the nectar (of Brahman) one should reject the world from which its essence consisting of Existence (*sat*) has been extracted just as one throws away a fruit after sucking its juice.

35. The eternal Self never dies, nor is it ever born, neither does it decay, nor, again, does it grow. It is devoid of all qualifications, is of the nature of bliss self-effulgent, all-pervading, and without a second.

36. In such a Self of absolute knowledge and bliss how can the world which is full of misery appear? It appears owing to ignorance and superimposition. It will vanish in a moment in the presence of knowledge, its opposite.

37. When a thing (seen somewhere) is perceived at another place owing to delusion it is called superimposition by the wise. Just as one perceives a snake in a rope, etc., where there is no snake at all, so also the world is superimposed on God.

38. In the Pure Consciousness which is devoid of delusion and ignorance, egoism (*ahamkara*) is first postulated. This is nothing but a superimposition on the Absolute and Supreme Brahman which is the cause of all and free from misery.

39. Desire, attachment, pleasure, etc., are the constant characteristics of the intellect and are the cause of *samsara* to the Supreme Self. For, in the absence of it (intellect) in deep sleep, the Supreme Self is experienced by us in the form of bliss.

40. The reflection of consciousness (Self) in the intellect caused by the beginningless ignorance, is called the sentient individual (*jiva*). When the Self stands aloof as the

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[2] The five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether are supposed to combine with one another in a particular manner to form the objects of the world. One half of each element is supposed to combine with one eighths of the remaining four elements.

[3] A full description of the *gunas* will be found in Chapter XIV of The Bhagavad Gita (see pages 299 to 301 of the October '68 issue of *The Mountain Path*).

witness of the intellect and is not conditioned by it, It is nothing but the Supreme Self.

41. Just as iron becomes hot (when it is in contact with) fire, so also when the intellect and the witnessing Self consisting of consciousness come into contact with each other there ensues a mutual superimposition of the inert and the sentient, namely the intellect and the Self which is consciousness.

42. After acquiring knowledge from the Vedic sayings or from the Guru and realizing that the Self exists within oneself without any limiting adjuncts, one should reject everything which is inert and the object of the Self.

43. "I am self-effulgent, unborn, non-dual, constant awareness, extremely pure, a mass of pure consciousness, free from misery, the whole, the blissful and inactive.

44. "I am always free and endowed with inconceivable power. I am consciousness which cannot be grasped by the sense-organs (i.e., I am transcendental knowledge). I am wholly inactive, without end or limit and am contemplated in their hearts day and night by the wise students of the Vedas."

45. When one constantly contemplates, in this manner, the Self which is Existence and Whole he gets rid of his ignorance and its effects, even as one gets rid of a disease by taking a (proper) medicine.

46. Sitting in a solitary place, with the senses indrawn and the mind subdued and completely purified the man who possesses the eye of wisdom and is established in himself should solely contemplate the One (Self).

47. He should merge this universe, the manifestation of the Supreme Self, with his own Self, the source of all, and remain as the infinite consciousness and bliss absolutely unaware of anything outside or inside.

48. Prior to (such) samadhi the entire world of animate and inanimate beings should be regarded as nothing but OM (or AUM). It (the world) is what is pressed by *pranava* (the sound OM). only in the state of nescience that it is not in the state of enlightenment.

49. It is declared by all that, before attainment of samadhi, the person (*puru* here consciousness) who is identified (the sound) 'A' (i.e., he whose sphere activity is the waking state) is ca Viswaka (or Vaiswanara or Viswa), w the experiencer of (the sound) 'U' (i.e., whose sphere of activity is the dream st is Taijasa and the experiencer of (sound) 'Ma' (i.e., he whose sphere is d sleep) is Prajna. But this is not really

50.-51. Viswa who is identical with sound) 'A' and appears as multipli must be merged in (the sound) 'U' w is in the middle. Taijasa, the second lette the *pranava* should be merged in 'Ma', last syllable. Prajna, who is 'Ma' and cause of all, should likewise he merge the absolute consciousness. (And one sh feel) : "I am that supreme Brahman, ever-Liberated consciousness, the seer, from limiting adjuncts and devoid impurity."

52. Attaining such constant identifica with the Supreme Self, content with his bliss and completely forgetting everyth else, the really Liberated man remains the unruffled ocean, radiating the joy of Eternal Self.

53. The Yogi who constantly prac samadhi in this manner and has withdra from all sense-objects and conquered all six foes[4] and the six gunas constantly Me (in his heart).

54. Absorbed thus in the Self day night, the contemplative man (*muni*) li freed for ever from all bondage, undergo the *prarabdha karma* (karma which begun to fructify) without the sense egoism, and eventually merges comple in Me.

[4] The six foes are desire, wrath, avarice, d sion, pride and malice.

55. Knowing that the relative existence (*bhāva*) is the cause of fear and grief, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, one must give up all the prescribed actions and adore (be devoted to) one's Self, the Self of all beings.

56. When one looks upon this (the universe) as not separate from the Self, one becomes completely identical with My Self, like water with the sea, milk with milk, ether with ether and air with air.

57. While living in the world the man of contemplation (*muni*) should always think in this manner and look upon the world, which has been rejected by the scriptures and reasoning, as unreal like the appearance of two moons (to a diseased eye) or the confusion regarding the directions of space (like mistaking the east for the west, which sometimes occurs).

58. As long as one does not see everything as My Self so long should he whole heartedly worship Me. To him who is endowed with faith and firmness in devotion I am always visible (present) in his heart.

59. Dear brother, after having come to a decision I have imparted to you this secret, the essence of the scriptures in brief. An intelligent person who reflects on it will be freed from a host of sins in a moment.

60. Brother, if you (still) perceive this world renounce it mentally as nothing but *maya* (illusion) and, with a pure heart attained through intense meditation on Me, be happy, free from misery and completely blissful.

61. He who wholeheartedly adores Me, conceiving Me as devoid of *gunas* or at times as endowed with them and yet transcending them, is truly Myself. By the dust of his feet he purifies the three worlds like the sun.

62. He who studies with faith and devotion to the Guru, as well as confidence in My words, this supreme teaching, the sole essence of all scriptures, communicated by Me, the truth to be known by Vedanta, attains My form (Godhead).

Wake Us Up!

By R. Narayana Iyer

I once asked Sri Bhagavan: "If all that we see is mere illusion, and no more real than a dream, what about the form before us, on the couch talking to us about Truth and Reality?" He remained silent for a few seconds. I repeated the question. He called for a Tamil book *Ozhuvil Odukkam* and read out and explained the second verse in it, which said that a Jnani is, to his disciple in jagrat (our state of wakefulness), like a lion in the dream of a mad elephant. The dream lion startles and wakes up the elephant — the lion, the dream and the elephant vanish and what is, remains. Even so the enlightened Guru wakes up the adept disciple to absolute Reality in which there is neither guru nor sishya. "Bhagavan, we are still asleep. Wake us up." I said "Who is it that is asleep, and who is it that wants to be woken up. Find that out first, and all doubts will vanish," said Sri Bhagavan. I was not satisfied. Then Sri Bhagavan said: "Last night you met a number of persons in your dream. Now, how would it look if I were to ask you to go and tell everyone of them, 'you are not real', 'you are not real', etc. What you say now is similar to that.

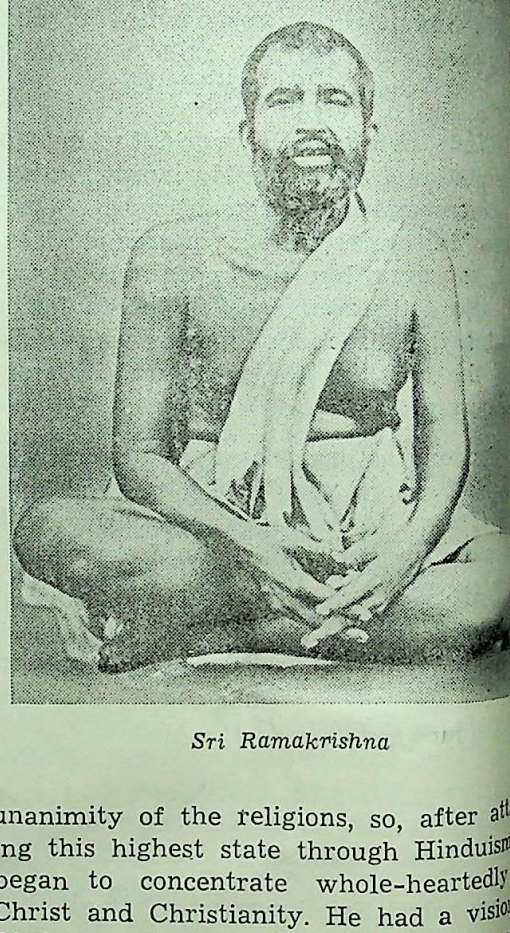
THE UNIVERSALITY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI VISHADANAN

ONE of the great achievements of Sri Ramakrishna was his insistence on the harmony between the religions. He was born a Hindu and conformed to an orthodox Hindu way of life. He worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses. Yet he worshipped and proclaimed the One Supreme God underlying them.

He did not write theory but used to expound his teaching in homely little stories, many of them (like the two that follow) being of older origin. Four travellers all wanted water (or, as another version has it, all went to the market and each asked for a different kind of fruit) and only when they received what they wanted did they realize that they had all asked for the same but each in a different language. Or a group of blind men all tried to describe an elephant. One felt its leg and declared that an elephant was like a pillar, another its ears and said it was like a winnowing basket, another its trunk and said it was a kind of rope, another its tail and said it was a kind of brush. Finally a man with sight came along and told them that they were all right in their own way, as far as it went, but the elephant was all this and more. Similar is the case of followers of the various religions who quarrel among themselves about the nature of God. Truth is God but is beyond the definitions of its votaries. As is said in the Rig Veda, "He is One but they call him by various names." All religions are paths leading to God.

This sort of declaration was not mere theory on the part of Sri Ramakrishna. With intense effort, so intense as to bring him to the verge of madness or despair, he realized God, attaining to the supreme state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Having once attained this divine state, he frequently fell into ecstasy and would utter words of revelation. He wanted to experience personally the



Sri Ramakrishna

unanimity of the religions, so, after att
ing this highest state through Hinduism
began to concentrate whole-heartedly
Christ and Christianity. He had a visio
Christ walking in the garden and exp
enced the same truth in Christian terms.
also concentrated on Islam and experie
(not understood but experienced) the s
truth.

He used to receive revelations from
or divine forms of higher regions and f
the Divine Mother. His own revelat
were also authority for him and he use
utter them in an exalted state of trance.
only in other religions but within the var
schools of Hinduism also, he experime
with various paths — Vaishnava, Sha
Shakta and so on — and realized thro

them the same ultimate divinity, peace and blessedness. He himself said that he felt the same divinity while realizing Christ or Islam or some Hindu manifestation of God. He declared that although God is One the paths leading to Him are many. What is needed is direct personal experience, and that each one must get for himself. Again he used a homely and well known image. Sweets are made of the same sugar in however many shapes and colours they may be. The thing to do is not to argue about the shape and colour but to taste them. He used to say that religions are like paths and from whatever distant country a person might come he could find some path to take him to his goal. Only he had to follow it steadfastly and with faith and leave others to follow theirs. Only hatred for any path and obstruction to those who follow it means obstruction to the Path-maker Himself, who is God.

Sri Ramakrishna did not argue about religions. He was illiterate and had no inclination for discussion. He worshipped God as the Universal Mother or as Jagadamba, the Source of the Cosmos. But that does not mean that there cannot also be more contingent deities and heavens. There may be superstitions and unworthy practices, but there are true ones also and no one knew more about them than Sri Ramakrishna. He knew that there are heavens or divine states with form and without form. Hindus speak of Vaikunta as a heaven of celestial forms. Beyond that is Brahmaloka where a personal God reigns but without form ; and beyond even that Sri Krishna speaks in the Bhagavad Gita of the Supreme Unmanifest, which is his ultimate Abode. Although Buddhism does not speak of God, it teaches similarly of higher regions where the purified can experience light and joy in the company of devas and other enlightened beings. But the final state of Enlightenment to which both Hinduism and Buddhism lead is that called Nirguna Brahman by the Hindus and Nirvana by the Buddhists in which no individual experience remains. Sri Ramakrishna did not encourage people to theorise about this but to strive for experience of the state of cosmic enlightenment extending infinitely. He confirmed that it can be attained through whatever religion one follows wholeheartedly. The paths may differ but the ultimate experience is the same. He lived at a time when there was much contact between the religions and this personal assurance of his was peculiarly needed. Let us hearken to it.

Clinging to Body?

By R. Narayana Iyer

One day in the last weeks of Sri Bhagavan's illness a devout lady prostrated herself before him with her two children, and entreated : " Bhagavan, you must not leave the body. You must continue to give us darshan." Bhagavan smiled and said : " Yes, yes, see there." He pointed to the sculptor at work on a statue of the Maharshi in granite. " They are chiselling a Bhagavan who would give you darshan always." Then he turned to the rest and said : " Now these people have become my gurus. I have been saying 'give up your *dehatma-buddhi* (identification with the body.)' They now want me to cling to the body." After a pause, he continued : " You see what it means ? I must not leave this body so that I can give her darshan always. To have darshan she too must not die. And what about her children ? They too must always have darshan. So, nobody should die." The truth was grimly portentous, and told in his own unique way.

THE SUBJECTIVITY OF TIME

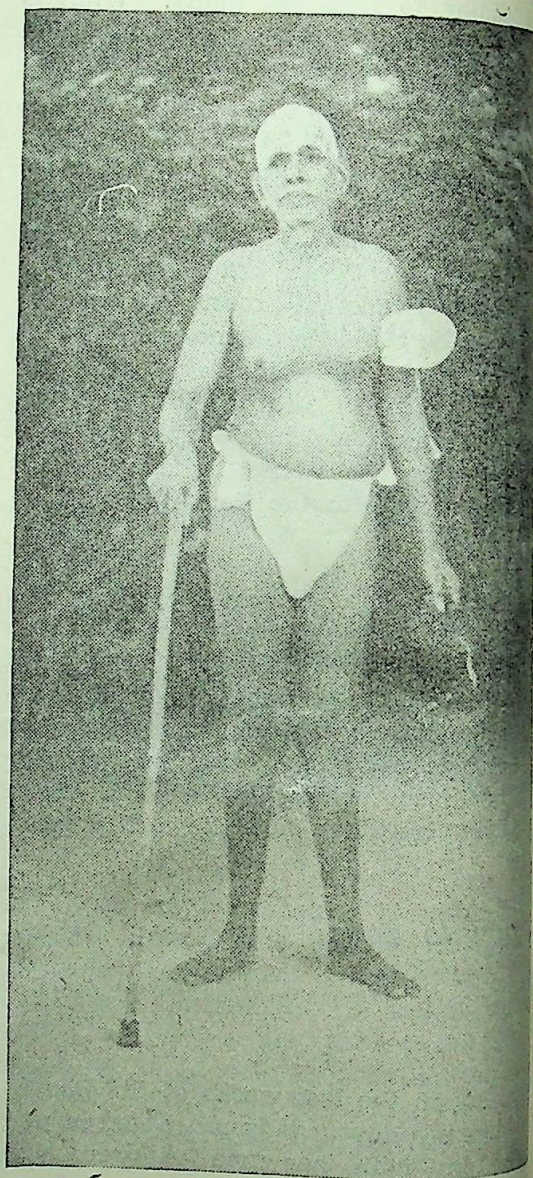
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THE Maharshi said "What is *eternal* is not recognised as such, owing to ignorance."[1] Ignorance of what is eternal is due to the concept of 'time', and so ignorance of eternality is a definition of that concept, since the eternal and a time-concept are interdependent counterparts, i.e. intemporality and temporality.

He continued: "Ignorance (the concept of 'time') is the obstruction. Get rid of it and all will be well. This ignorance (the concept of 'time') *is identical with the 'I' thought.* Seek its source and it will vanish."

The "'I' thought" is entirely a temporal product, depending upon and exclusively appearing to exist subject to temporal extension (duration). If you apperceive what 'time' *is* it must simultaneously disappear *as an object in mind.* It is then revealed as the essential element in the constitution of an I-concept or conceptual 'I', and the I-concept as an object in split-mind must go with it, for neither what 'time' *is* nor what 'I' *am* can have any objective quality whatever.[2]

An 'I-concept' and the 'time-concept' are inseparable, neither can appear to exist without the other: they are dual aspects of what is erroneously conceived as objective, and are themselves believed to have objective existence as such. That assumed objective existence of what is a concept-of-sequence in mind is precisely the foundation of the notion of 'bondage'. Seeking to dispose of one aspect without the other is a labour of Sisyphus, for the one that is left will inevitably bring back its fellow on which it depends. As long as the concept of 'time' as an objective existence, as a continuity independent of the continuous perceiver of it, is left untouched, that object must retain its subject — and its subject, the perceiver of it, is precisely the I-concept in question.



That is why the nature of 'time' sho
be revealed. In the distant past an analy
of the nature of 'time' was not in acco
ance with current modes of thought and

[1] *Teachings*, p. 118.

[2] In case there should be any misapprehensio
"What 'time' *is*" is what split-mind tries
conceive as 'Intemporality', just as "What I a
is what split-mind tries to conceive as 'I' wh
respectively are only cognisable in relati
objectified as 'time' and as 'me'.

general knowledge, so that no tradition of it was handed down by the Masters, who certainly understood it since they refer to it obscurely but quite often, but this is not a valid reason for us to ignore it. For us it should be readily comprehensible, and its comprehension is urgent, the more so since it will hardly be denied that many of the ancient traditional approaches to the essential problem have lost much of their force through unending repetition and the autohypnosis that accompanies the repetition of all kinds of popular concepts.

If the I-concept can be disposed of for a moment, and the concept of duration remains, the latter will restore the former which is extended therein and which remains with it. This, indeed, is a familiar occurrence, but its mechanism is not recognised. On the other hand, if the concept of duration is seen as invalid, as not an objective existence to which 'we' can be bound, but as an essential part of our appearance, extended therein, being our-extension, its removal must necessarily carry away with it all that is extended in it. Then the supposed objective character of both lapses, and the process of objectification ceases, leaving 'us' as what intemporally we are.[3]

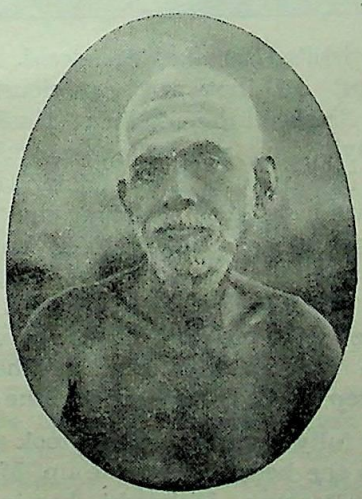
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3 What is termed 'an I-concept' is a symbol of the splitting of whole-mind into relative duality, which consists in conceiving 'other-than-self' as a space-time entity, whereby its interdependent counterpart 'self' becomes another. This dual, or divided, functioning of mind (just termed 'mind' by the Maharshi) appears as the conceiver or functioning 'I', temporally extended as 'duration'. Therefore the Maharshi states "The mind is only the thought 'I'".

As long as we continue to regard 'space-time' as objectively factual we are not merely 'bound' — we are *trussed*!

The Direct Path

By 'Vishnu'



Bhagavan Sri Ramana taught that Vedas and Upanishads are not mere book-lore or dry script, that moksha or Liberation is not something to be attained in a distant future or after death, but that it is our ever-present nature, to be known and experienced HERE and NOW, that we are ever realized and that the simple and direct method is introspection and self-enquiry. I once asked him: "Bhagavan, it is said that all roads lead to Rome. All religions lead to the same goal. How, can it be said that the quest *Who am I* ? is the only way and the direct way ?" He replied: "Yes, all roads lead to Rome. But, on reaching Rome, you have to go to the citadel — the *sanctum*. What I say is just that."

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

M. L. BHA

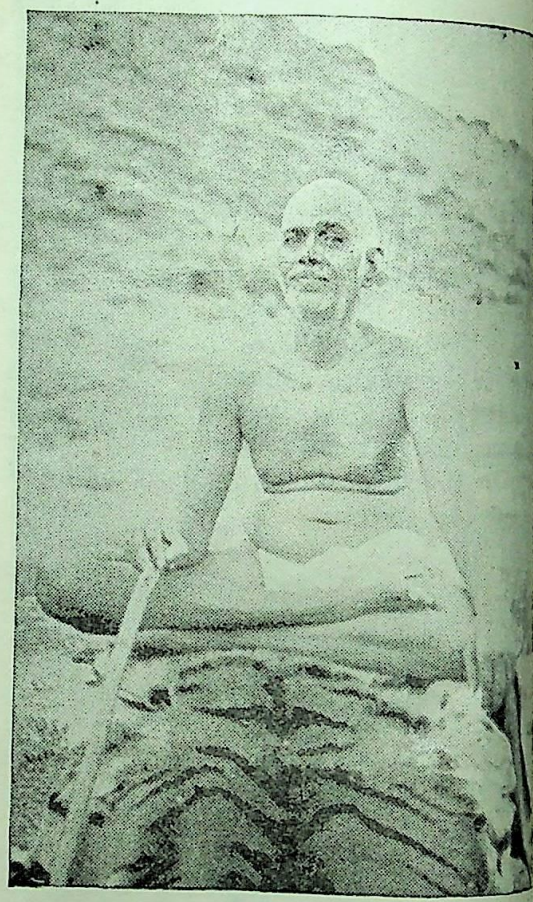
I AM an individual from the common lot with not much of religious or spiritual background by way of environment or education. Brahmin by birth, brought up to an unrigid, flexible way of life, I developed a broad, even indifferent way of looking at things religious.

I was staying at Matunga (Bombay). In the building known as Tejoo Kaya Park, the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Ramana Maharshi (in 1947) were being celebrated with great eclat. Few of us went there and we humourously named the celebrated one "Madrasi God Ramana".

I cannot describe how and why, but the word "Ramana" got planted in me somewhere there and then grew within me. Four years passed by. I visited a relation's office in November, 1952 at Ahmedabad. He had put on exhibition many books of a famous Indian Ashram and invited me to have a look and purchase some books which were brought to his office by an inmate of the ashram. Books were lying on the long table. I went through the line of them and at the end of it saw six books published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

I forgot about the other books I had intended to get and instead picked out all the six and went with them to my brother's house.

I was fully engrossed, you could say buried, in the currents flowing without knowing or understanding what electric charge was developing within me. On my return to Delhi, I requested a learned friend to help me understand the spirituality I was being pushed into by my new books. He invited me to his residence. At 4 p.m., I started to read and he to guide me, or cross-examine my understanding. We were going through the Gujarati book, *Ramana Vani* (Maharshi's Gospel, in English) and Swami

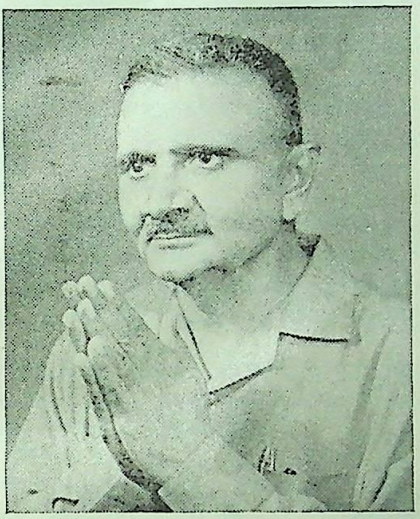


Madhavtirth's *Ramana Maharshi*. I m
have lost all outward consciousness,
when I finished the reading, I asked
time, saying my wife must be waiting
dinner. My friend, Sri Mohanbhai Sh
who must have been watching me with
utmost patience for the last few hours, t
me very kindly that it was 11 p.m.
added : "You have had your meal alre
at 9 p.m. with me, and, look, my wife a
children are already asleep." They we
fast asleep on beds made up on the floor.

I was fully unaware when I took my m
or when the beds were made up. My frie
added "Ramana Maharshi has possess
you." My eyes became wet and I went hom
Since that day, I have never for a day fo

gotten Ramana, the God. I have had living experience of HIM. I am narrating these episodes after GOD RAMANA has left his body at Tiruvannamalai. I had not the privilege to see him in his physical body.

Since then, I have visited the Ashram twice. It became my habit when travelling



Sri M. L. Bhatt

to recite "Ram" "Ram" "Ramana" "Ramana" with the running of the moving train. I felt the vibrations in my veins. Sometimes, I felt his presence and one day (to be exact at 7 p.m. on 18-12-1952), while travelling by train from Modinagar to Delhi, a poem came to me.

"Let me remember you
God Ramana
A hundred times in a day."

"You came as a flash
Once in my life and OM Ramana
Current flowing ceaselessly
By your grace LORD RAMANA,"

"I close my eyes and you come
And keep the current flowing.
I pray now, come,
In recesses of my sleep, and
Give me your benevolent flash
Let me remember you GOD
Within my heart LORD RAMANA
In my dreams."

My narration will be incomplete if I do not give the vivid experiences I have had of HIS presence felt and my prayers miraculously answered.

1. I was serving a big textile group and suddenly resigned on a question of prestige in July, 1955. Mental depression followed : "who will give you employment, you fool, now at the age of 47 ?" I prayed and got the answer "Why worry" "Be STILL". I cannot say why but I decided that I would not make any frantic efforts or seek influence but wait for the call from unknown quarters. I pledged myself to stay at home for 30 days and seek help only from prayer to the master. I do not do any puja or ritual of any sort ; my puja is only mental remembrance of HIM, by rythm of which life may come and go at HIS WILL.

Twenty-nine days passed, my courage diminishing day by day. But not my faith. Exactly on the thirtieth day, a casual acquaintance came to my house, seeking me and bringing an offer of a better job. I thanked the Master.

2. I had another vivid experience in 1964. By now I had become a confirmed *Prarabdhavadi* (or believer in destiny) according to my friends. Once again when I resigned at the age of 55 in similar circumstances another position came of its own accord ; my colleague, Sri Gulabchand Jain, exclaimed : "It is a miracle ; Ramana Maharshi is protecting you."

3. There have been more such happenings in my life, some are very personal and it is not my intention to narrate my own life.

In conclusion, most humbly, I say that my prayers to the Master, have been amply rewarded, that I have been a chosen one for such blessing, I am all submission to Him, trying to propagate his teachings in my humble way.

"Let me Remember you
GOD RAMANA,
A hundred times a day,
Let me."

YOGA VASISHTA SARA[1]

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

Based on a translation made By SWAMI SURESANAN

Chapter II

UNREALITY OF THE WORLD

1. Just as the great ocean of milk became still when the Mandara Mountain (with which it was churned by the Devas and the Asuras) became still, even so the illusion of samsara comes to an end when the mind is stilled.

2. Samsara rises when the mind becomes active and ceases when it is still. Still the mind, therefore, by controlling the breath and the latent desires (*vasanas*).

3. This worthless (*lit.* burnt out) samsara is born of one's imagination and vanishes in the absence of imagination. It is certain that it is absolutely unsubstantial.

4. The idea of a (live) snake in a picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the truth is known. Similarly samsara ceases to exist (when the Truth is realized), even if it continues to appear.

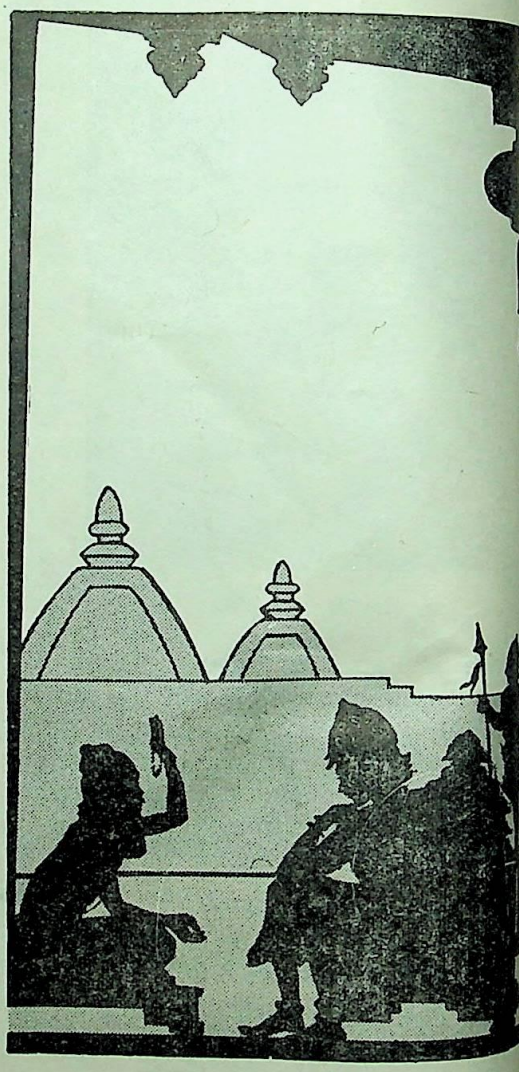
5. This long-living ghost of a samsara which is the creation of the deluded mind of man and the cause of his sufferings disappears when one ponders over it.

6. O Rama, maya is such that it brings delight through its own destruction ; its nature is inscrutable ; it ceases to exist even while it is being observed.

7. Dear boy, wonderful indeed is this maya which deludes the entire world. It is on account of it that the Self is not perceived even though it pervades all the limbs of the body.

8. Whatever is seen does not truly exist. It is like the mythical city of Gandharvas (*fata morgana*) or a mirage.

9. That which is not seen, though within us, is called the eternal and indestructible Self.



10. Just as the trees on the bank of a l are reflected in the water, so also all th varied objects are reflected in the mirror of our consciousness.

11. This creation, which is a mere p of consciousness, rises up, like the delus of a snake in a rope (when there is ign ance) and comes to an end when there right knowledge.

[1] Continued from our last issue.

12. Even though bondage does not really exist, it becomes strong through desire for worldly enjoyments; when this desire subsides bondage becomes weak.

13. Like waves rising up from the ocean the unstable mind rises out of the vast and stable expanse of the Supreme Self.

14. It is because of that which always, of its own accord, imagines (everything) quickly and freely that this magical show (of the world) is projected in the waking state.

15. This world, though unreal, appears to exist and is the cause of life-long suffering to an ignorant person, just as a (non-existent) ghost (is the cause of fear) to a boy.

16. One who has no idea of gold sees only the bracelet. He does not at all have the idea that it is merely gold.

17. Similarly towns, houses, mountains, serpents, etc. are all in the eyes of the ignorant man, separate objects. From the absolute point of view this objective (world) is the subject (the Self) itself; it is not separate (from the Self).

18. The world is full of misery to an ignorant man and full of bliss to a wise man. The world is dark to a blind man and bright to one who has eyes.

19. The bliss of a man of discrimination, who has rejected samsara and discarded all mental concepts, constantly increases.

20. Like clouds which suddenly appear in a clear sky and as suddenly dissolve the entire universe (appears) in the Self and (dissolves in it).

21. He who reckons the rays as non-different from the sun and realizes that they are the sun itself is stated to be *nirvikalpa* (the undifferentiated state).

22. Just as the cloth, when investigated, is seen to be nothing but thread, so also this world, when enquired into, is (seen to be) merely the Self.

23. This fascinating world rises like a wave in the ambrosial ocean of consciousness and dissolves in it. How then can it be different from it (consciousness) in the middle (i.e. when it appears)?

24. Just as the foam, the waves, the dew and the bubbles are not different from water, even so this world which has come out of the Self is not different from the Self.

25. Just as a tree consisting of fruits, leaves, creepers, flowers, branches, twigs and roots, exists in the seed of the tree, even so this manifest world exists in Brahman.

26. Just as the pot (ultimately) goes back to mud, waves into water and ornaments into gold, so also this world which has come out of the Self (ultimately) goes back to the Self.

27. The snake appears when one does not recognize the rope; it disappears when one recognize the rope. Even so this world appears when the Self is not recognized; it disappears when the Self is recognized.

28. It is only our forgetfulness of the invisible Self which causes the world to appear just as (the ignorance of the) rope (causes the) snake to appear.

29. Just as the dream becomes unreal in the waking state and the waking state in the dream, so also death becomes unreal in birth and birth in death.

30. All these are thus neither real nor unreal. They are the effect of delusion, mere impressions arising out of some past experiences.

(To be Continued)

"The inner Silence is self-surrender. And that is living without the sense of ego."

— SRI RAMANA

PEAK AND PLATEAU

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SAHAJA SAMADHI

Prof. U. A. As

The R. M. Bucke Memorial Society *Newsletter-Review* edited by Dr. Raymond Prince and D. H. Salman, O.P. of Montreal is making a very interesting attempt to find common ground between mystics and psychologists. We reviewed its inaugural issue in April 1967. We now have pleasure in reproducing an article from it by Prof. U. A. Asrani.

MUCH confusion and debate about mysticism appears to me to be due to the fact that the true goal of mysticism is in dispute. Two main goals have been suggested.

1. The enjoyment of 'peak experiences' or samadhis, as we call them in India.

2. The attainment of the 'mystical plateau' as Osborne calls it (*Newsletter-Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 13). This plateau has a variety of names in various traditions, for example, *Sthita Prajna* or *Jivan Mukta* by the Hindus, *Baqua* or *Haquiqat* by the Sufis the *Bodhisatva* state by the Buddhists, the *Vita-Raga* state by the Jains and the *Unitive* state by the Christians.

Peak experiences are such striking phenomena that many consider them to be not only the *sine qua non* of genuine mysticism, but also its final goal. But, as Osborne's letter indicates, this view is questionable. The enjoyment of peak experience tends towards escapism or quietism. It has historically failed to meet squarely the challenging situations of history, even in India and Tibet, where peak experiences of various types have been pursued to the utmost limits.

Peak experiences are also claimed to bring the mystic face to face with Reality. But one must face the question whether this description is just a mere figure of speech ; whether the intuitions derived are not mere expressions of ineffable joy, from which no realistic core of philosophy can be derived.

Furthermore, it is a moot point wh our language and logic are adequate cles for a description of this synthetic which we call Reality ; their inade has been exposed even by the scienc physics and biology.

Hence if we disregard the claims benefits derived from peak experiences death because they are not verifiable, is reason to argue that the second stat *sahaja* state, should be regarded as th final goal of the mystic's endeavours.

Osborne, a disciple of Ramana Mah the great South Indian mystic of times, confirms this. In fact, apart fro contrary opinion held by certain emo mystics such as the Bhaktas among Hindus, Sufis among the Muslims, and tain Christian mystics, it is the concens mystics the world over that peak ex ences are mere means to the final end is the *sahaja* state. Peak experiences from one mystic school to another, bu plateau of *sahaja* is very nearly the in all. Peak experiences simply demons to the mystic that the entire wor desires, emotions, fears, anxieties attachments can be merged into one absorbing experience, or even rolled up a map at will. The peak experiences thus only an aid in attaining that pe unselfishness and detachment of the s state.

What are the characteristics of the s state ? The following seem important. a state of ideal or optimal mental health

superior to that of the normal mental health which is the goal of psychoanalysts. Osborne very rightly distinguishes the two. This ideal mental health consists of all the traits of positive mental health described by Western specialists (see Marie Jahoda, *Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health, Basic Books*, 1958, and other literature on the subject). The only qualitative difference between the Eastern ideal and the Western specialists' ideal is a matter of emphasis.

1. Unselfishness or detachment or freedom from gnawing desires or ambitions is the very basis of the *sahaja* state ; without it *sahaja* is impossible. Mental Health specialists on the other hand only mention these traits along with the absence of self-consciousness, but they do not give them a fundamental position. 2. Accurate perception of reality which is so characteristic of mental health according to specialists in the West is distinctly stressed only in some mystic texts, (for example, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Vasishta,* among Hindu mystic texts) but not by all. This may be due to escapist tendencies which have been rampant in all schools of mysticism or it may be due to the fact that such detached realism as envisaged in the *sahaja* state is not possible for the ordinary mystic votary. It is possible only when one reaches the *sahaja* state itself. Emphasising realism at lower stages might enhance egoism, which has to be considerably reduced for the achievement of the *sahaja* state.

The *sahaja* state yields equanimity, a heightened frustration-tolerance and a sense of freedom ; one begins to live in the present. It leads to concentration and efficiency in every activity, impartiality and freedom from bias in all judgments ; elimination of all mental and emotional tensions ; and an elimination of an over-concern with metaphysical questions. That state also enhances aesthetic appreciation and simplifies the pursuit of ethical values because of the unselfish detached attitude which is at the root of that state.

I say this not merely on the basis of the writings of others, but also on the basis of personal experience (please see my article on "A Clue to the Missing Link between Science and Mysticism" in Psychic International of Moradabad, India, May 1965). I entirely endorse the statement of Dr. Assagioli that the debates on the nature of the mystic experience are confused by the fact that those who write on the topic have had no personal experience. Hence I believe that those interested in mysticism as an intellectual study should attempt to attain personal experience.

Only on one point as regards behaviour in the *sahaja* state would I beg to differ with Mr. Osborne. The equanimity of the *sahaja* state is not rigid or static ; it is more like the dynamic equilibrium of a man running stably on two bicycle wheels. There may be desires and drives, very strong ones too, like playing a football game or fighting on a battlefield. But the outlook is altered to the extent that as soon as the game is over, whether it is won or lost, the mind is relaxed like that of the perfect sportsman. One may even run away from a situation of danger. In one story it is reported that the great Sankara ran away on the approach of a large elephant. It all depends upon circumstances. The reactions of a Sage in the *sahaja* state are disproportionate, not exaggerated by inordinate desires, fears or anxieties.

Such a Sage sleeps very soundly and needs less sleep. With his habit of concentration on every act he eats with gusto, even water tastes sweet to him. Sleeping, eating and drinking are natural needs and he neither exaggerates nor avoids them. After each natural drive is fulfilled he is relaxed ; he takes all drives — their fulfilment as well as their frustration — with ease. A box dragged along a road meets with a considerable amount of friction but one hundred times the load can be pulled along on a wheeled vehicle with ease. The Sage in the *sahaja* takes all the burdens of life on the wheeled vehicle of unselfishness.

Finally, as regards mystic experience and regression, I would support Reza Arestah

who calls peak experiences "natural" (*Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 19-20). Progress in any line may be spiral and in mysticism it also appears to be like that. Even a *sahaja* mystic behaves innocently as a child ; but he does so in spite of being an adult and his innocence and detachment are superior to those of a child. An infant has yet to develop his ego ; the *sahaja* mystic on the other hand, even after having developed once, succeeds in pruning it to such a b minimum that it cannot cause any fe anxieties or frustrations to him. He relax after every drive. The *sahaja* sta not a mere return to a primordial stat is a discovery after alienation from o true nature caused by 'undesirable c rearing, schooling and social situations

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City of Brahman

.....

Within the city of Brahman, which is the body, there is the heart, and within the heart there is a little house. This house has the shape of a lotus, and within it dwells that which is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized.

What then is that which, dwelling within this little house, this lotus of the heart, is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized ?

As large as the Universe outside, even so large is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightning, and all the stars. What is in the macrocosm is in this microcosm.

All things that exist, all beings and all desires, are in the city of Brahman, what then becomes of them when old age approaches and the body dissolves in death ?

Though old age comes to the body, the lotus of the heart does not grow old. At death of the body, it does not die. The lotus of the heart, where Brahman exists in all his glory — that, and not the body, is the true city of Brahman. Brahman, dwelling therein, is untouched by any deed, ageless, deathless, free from grief, free from hunger and from thirst. His desires are right desires, and his desires are fulfilled.

As here on earth all the wealth that one earns is but transitory, so likewise transitory are the heavenly enjoyments acquired by the performnce of sacrifices. Therefore those who die without having realized the Self and its right desires find no permanent happiness in any world to which they go ; while those who have realized the Self and its right desires find permanent happiness everywhere.

— CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD.

TWO GREAT MEN MEET BHAGAVAN

By
Viswanathan [1]

Achyuthadasa was one of the earliest to discern Sri Bhagavan's spiritual greatness. He was known as Abboy Naidu before he renounced the world, and was skilled in playing upon the *mridangam*.[2] He has composed Tamil *kirtanas* (songs) of great merit, which are devotional and advaitic. Having heard about Sri Bhagvan he went to Gurumoortham, the Samadhi temple of a sadhu,[3] where Sri Bhagavan was living deeply immersed in *nirvikalpa* samadhi, during the closing years of the last century. He sat in front of Sri Bhagavan and waited. As Sri Bhagavan who was then a yound lad, opened his eyes, he paid his respects to him, massaged his feet and exclaimed with great devotional fervour, "One may be a great scholar, an author or composer and everything else in the world. But it is indeed very rare to come across any one actually established in the Self Supreme like you." He then announced to his own disciples that there was "something very rare at Tiruvannamalai", meaning Sri Bhagavan. Achyutadasa's Samadhi is at Kannamangalam, a few miles north of Arni in the North Arcot district of Madras State.

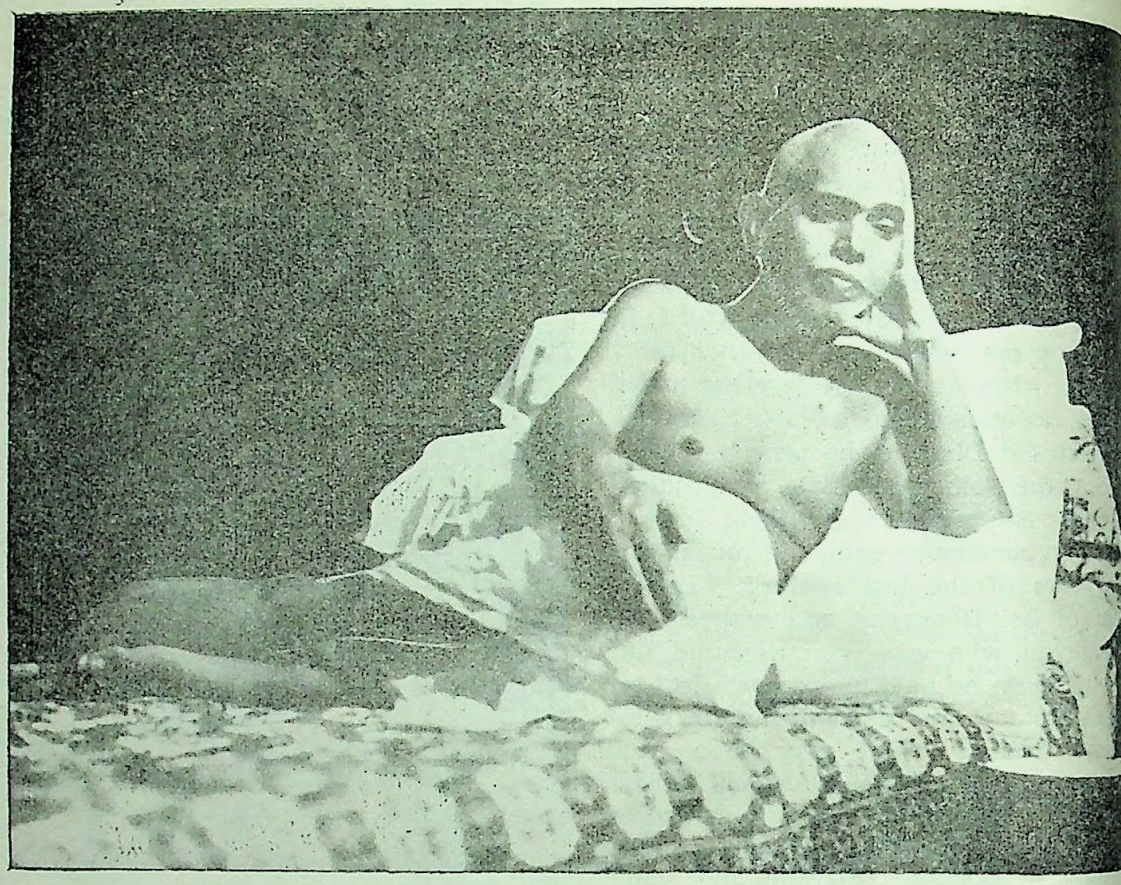


This is an instance of how spiritually minded people were impressed with Sri Bhagavan's greatness at the very sight of him even in his early years at Tiruvannamalai.

* * *

Another great man who visited Sri Bhagavan and was greatly impressed was Sri Narayana Guru[4] of Kerala. The latter is well-known in South India as a man of great tapas and a great social and religious reformer. He visited Sri Bhagavan when he was living at Skandashram. After paying his respects to Sri Bhagavan he sat silently watching him. People, young and old, paid their respects to him and sat or passed on, while Sri Bhagavan sat silently with unwinking wide-open eyes. He took no particular notice of anybody. He did not enquire, about the whereabouts of anybody. There was no welcome and no permission to go. But all the while he was beaming with blissful joy and the audience was partaking of it. At the invitation of Sri Bhagavan Sri Narayana Guru took his lunch with him and his devotees and later took leave of him, saying : "May it be the same way here

1 Introduced to our readers in our issue of Jan. '67, p. 82.
2 A small drum-instrument used at Karnatic musical concerts.
3 Situated near the village Kinathur, an eastern suburb of Tiruvannamalai.
4 An article on whom appeared in our issue of July, '66, p. 243.



also ", meaning that he might also be blessed so as to be established in the Self as Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan gave a gracious smile.

On reaching his place Sri Narayana Guru wrote five verses in Sanskrit, known as *Nivritti Panchakam*, and sent it to the Ashram. The theme of the composition is that he alone enjoys the Peace of Re (*moksha*) who does not allow his mi observe or enquire about the differ pertaining to relative (mundane) exis and has risen above all formalities of w ly life. Sri Narayana Guru used to be g ly pleased whenever any of his disc visited Sri Bhagavan, and used to l with delight to the details of the visit.

The wise call thee the impersonal, without attributes ;

They also call thee the personal God with divine attributes ;

Thou art both, and thou dost manifest thyself as the one or the other,
According to our understanding.

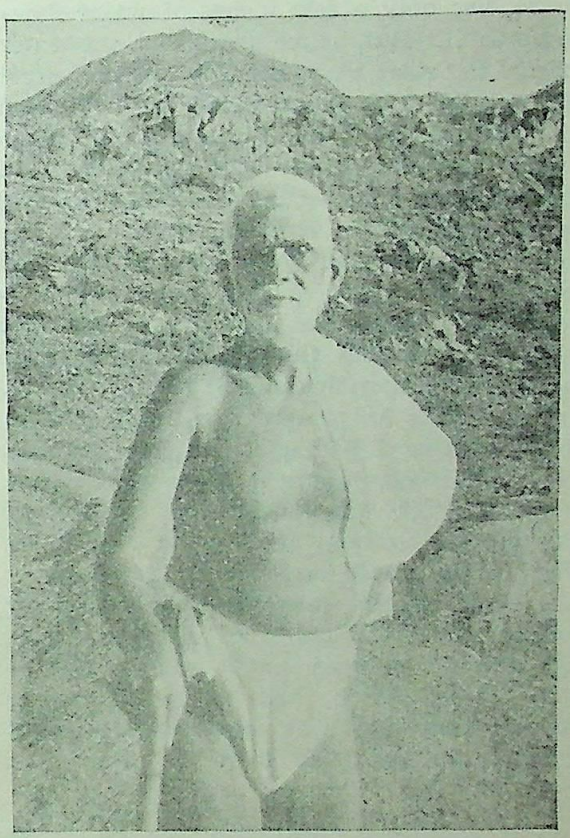
— SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM.

INTO SRI BHAGAVAN'S FOLD

By

K. PADMANABHAN [1]

IT was in the year 1918, when I was thirteen years old, that my uncle who was the Tahsildar of Tindivanam celebrated the *Upanayanam* (investing a boy with the sacred thread) of his eldest son at Tiruvannamalai. The *Upanayanam* of my elder brother was also celebrated along with his cousin's *Upanayanam*. The function gave me my first opportunity of going to Tiruvannamalai. I had not till then heard of the place or the temple, much less about the Maharshi who was then living at Skandasramam on the Hill, Arunachala. While the ceremony was going on a few of us boys who were not interested in the rituals began to climb the Hill from the side of the temple. There was no regular pathway at that time as it is today and we had to make our way through thorny shrubs. The climbing was also tiresome, but at last we reached Skandasramam. We were not particularly eager to see the Maharshi, but having gone up to the Ashram we were curious to see Him. After seeing Him we returned. I was limping with a thorn in my foot and bleeding from several cuts and bruises. I was cross and cursed the day. Little did I know that it was the most auspicious and blessed day in my life!



Ten years later, in 1929, when I was a graduate-engineer undergoing practical training under the well-known firm of Gannon Dunkerley & Co., building contractors, and supervising the construction of the Turinjalar bridge at Tirukoilur, a small town twenty miles distant from Tiruvannamalai, I paid my second visit to Tiruvannamalai. I was one of a party of four tennis players who had been invited by the Tiruvannamalai Club to play a few matches there. After play we had to wait a few hours to catch our train back to Tirukoilur. So we decided to go to Sri Ramanasramam and have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. This time also I was not particularly anxious to see Him. We reached the Ashram at about 8 p.m. and sat in the meditation hall in front of Sri Bhagavan for about half an hour. Although His glance fell on me for a moment I was not impressed at all by Him or the complete silence in the Hall. However, before leaving the Hall I prostrated myself before Him although rather reluctantly. I was too young and immature then to understand His greatness in spite of the pious and religious spirit in which I had grown up.

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[1] He is now one of the Trustees of the Ashram, for a reference to whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of April '67, p. 162.

The train was late and, when we alighted at the railway station of Aragandanallur, it was nearly 11 p.m. We had to cross the river Pennar over a narrow causeway of irregular stones, before we could reach Tirukoilur. When we came to the causeway there was only a few inches of water flowing over it. But, as we proceeded, the water began to rise very rapidly to our great alarm! We had covered only 100 feet and had almost the same distance to cover to reach the other bank of the river. We could not go back; nor could we hurry forward on account of the irregular stones and the force of the stream. We became panicky and caught hold of one another to prevent ourselves from being washed away. In complete silence we waded through the water upon which were now floating all sorts of things. My thoughts went back to Sri Bhagavan. I feared that I had offended Him and that this was His punishment for my disrespect. I prayed for His forgiveness. At last we reached the other bank half dead with fright. We stood for some time looking at the flood which was now carrying away bullocks, carts, bundles of straw and hay etc. I was convinced that it was Sri Bhagavan's Grace which had saved us from a similar fate. But this conviction was short lived. I did not even go to the Ashram to show my gratitude to Sri Bhagavan. However, I did not forget the incident and I went to the Ashram again only in 1962, more than thirty years later!

This time also it was sheer chance which took me there. A friend of mine took me to Chingleput to look at the new hospital that was coming up there. After examining it I suddenly decided to go to Tiruvannamalai. We spent the night at a hotel and next day proceeded to the Ashram where the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, after making kind enquiries, suggested us to assist him in preparing a layout for a few small buildings[2] on a plot of land which had been acquired by the Ashram across the road. This was a turning point in my life. My association with the Ashram has ever since been growing stronger day by day.

Looking back upon the incidents narrated above I feel convinced that Sri Bhagavan's Grace was evident throughout. I have no doubt that it still exists strongly although He is no longer with us physically.

Blessed am I to be in His fold again!

[2] Sri Padmanabhan has also constructed and donated a building in the Ashram land outside its premises, for the convenience of ladies' stay. It is named after his late wife, Kamala Padmanabhan.

Time

By V. Venkataraman

In the years when I used to sleep on the floor of the hall, beside Bhagavan, I woke up one night to see him reclining on his couch. Seeing that I was awake, he said: "In my early years at Tiruvannamalai I sometimes opened my eyes and found that it was dark, and sometimes it was light. That was all that I knew of the passing of day and night."

The Way of Chuang Tzu

By
Fr. Thomas Merton

THE KINGLY MAN

My Master said :

That which acts on all and meddles in none, is heaven . . .

The Superior Man realizes this, hides it in his heart
Grows boundless, wide-minded, draws all to himself.
And so he lets the gold lie hidden in the mountain,
Leaves the pearls lying in the deep.
Goods and possessions are no gain in his eyes,
He stays far from wealth and honour.

Long Life is no ground for joy, nor early death for sorrow.
Success is not for him to be proud of, failure is no shame.
Had he all the world's power he would not hold it as his own
If he conquered everything he would not take it to himself
His glory is in knowing that all things come together in One
And life and death are equal.

HOW DEEP IS TAO !

My Master said : Tao, how deep, how still its hiding place !
Tao, how pure !
Without this stillness, metal would not ring, stone when struck
would give no answer —

The power of sound is in the metal and Tao in all things.
When they clash, they ring with Tao,
And are silent again.
Who is there, now, to tell all things their places ?
The king of life goes his way free, inactive, unknown,
He would blush to be in business
He keeps his deep roots down in the origin, down in the spring,
His knowledge is enfolded in Spirit,
And he grows great, great, opens a great heart, a world's refuge.
Without forethought he comes out, in majesty,
Without plan he goes his way and all things follow him :
This is the kingly man, who rides above life.

This one sees in the dark, hears where there is no sound.
In the deep dark he alone sees light
In soundlessness he alone perceives music
He can go down into the lowest of low places
And find people
He can stand in the highest of high places
And see meaning.
He is in contact with all beings :
That which is not, goes his way,
That which moves is what he stands on.
Great is small for him, long is short for him,
And all his distances are near.

THE LOST PEARL

The Yellow Emperor went wandering
To the north of the Red Water
To the Kwan Lun mountain, He looked around
Over the edge of the world. On the way home
He lost his night coloured pearl.
He sent out science to seek his pearl, and got nothing
He sent analysis to look for his pearl and got nothing.
He sent out logic to seek his pearl and got nothing
Then he asked Nothingness, and Nothingness had it!
The Yellow Emperor said :
" Strange indeed : Nothingness
Who was not sent
Who did no work to find it
Had the night coloured pearl ! "

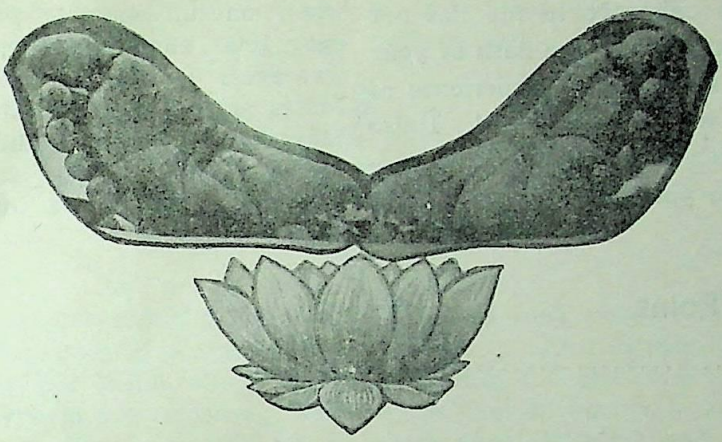
IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING

In the beginning of beginnings was Void of Void : the Nameless.
And in the Nameless was the One, without body, without form,
This One, — This Being in Whom all find power to exist,
Is the Living.
From the Living : comes the Formless, the undivided.
From the act of this Formless, come the existence, each according
To its inner principle : This is Form. Here body embraces and
cherishes spirit.
The two work together as one, blending and manifesting their
Characters. And this is Nature.
But he who obeyes Nature returns through Form and Formless to
the Living
And in the Living
Joins the unbegun Beginning.
The joining is Sameness. The sameness is Void. The Void is infinite.

The bird opens and sings its note
And then the beak comes together again in Silence.
So Nature and the Living meet together in Void.
Like the closing of the bird's beak
After its song
Heaven and earth come together in the unbegun,
And all is foolishness, all is unknown, all is like
The lights of an idiot, all is without mind !
To obey is to close the beak and fall into Unbeginning.

" That State which transcends speech and thought is *Mouna* ; it is meditation without mental activity."

— SRI MAHARSHI.



At His Lotus Feet

The following three short articles were published in the RAMANA PICTORIAL SOUVENIR, brought out in commemoration of the *Kumbhabhishekam* of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi shrine in 1967. They are now reproduced here for the benefit of our readers.

I

Identity with the Universal

By

Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni *

LORD, my present inner experience achieved by Sri Bhagavan's look of grace, I understand as inherence in the *Vijnana Atman* — the sphere of Pure Intellect. I clearly experience myself in the cave of the Heart quite distinct from the body ; yet I have not ceased to look upon the world as different from myself. And so I consider that this is not the complete and ultimate inherence in the Self. May Sri Bhagavan himself bless me with that *Purna Nishta*, by his gracious look capable of traversing any distance. My experience of ecstasy hitherto was particularly dynamic — it was pure and simple flow of power ; but now it is perceived to be a flow of light giving a sense of utmost lightness. My faith is getting strengthened that the Deities are working upon me for the fulfilment of the great task, impelled by Bhagavan Sri Maharshi's look of grace. May Sri Bhagavan send me as reply his Look of Compassion !

The *Sat-darsana* Sanskrit verse-rendering was finished on Saturday ..... From that Saturday my vision became distinct. I appear to see all things as One Real Existence. It is my prayer to Bhagavan that this vision may culminate in permanent experience. I see as bubbles in water all changing forms in One Existence ; and I try to discard the former and experience pure existence alone everywhere.

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* Extracts from letters written by Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni in 1931 to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, from Anandashrama, Sirsi, Mysore State.

Bhagavan, Slayer of Maya's offspring, the sense of separate existence in me has not yet vanished. I know that one flash of your wish could bless me with the experience of absolute identity with the Universal. I also know that no wish whatsoever could consciously set foot in your heart.

My Lord, I consider everything achie when on full maturity of one's *tapas* ego gets annihilated, spontaneous awareness is well established and all senses are entirely dedicated to the Di May my inherence in the *Vijnana A* (Pure Intellect) show me the way abidance at the Source, the Reality!

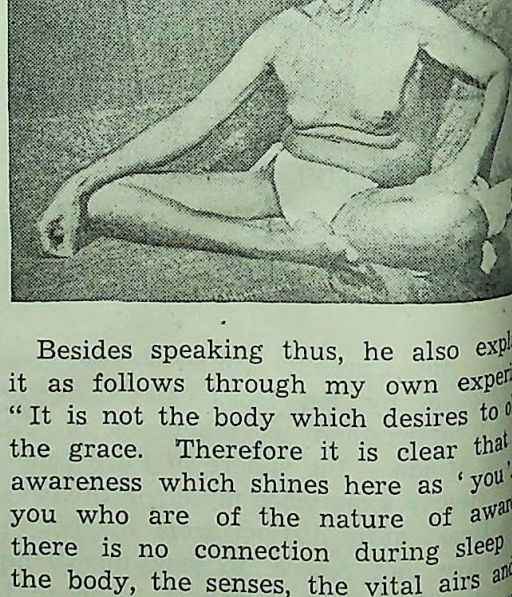
II

The Turning Point

Natanan

I WAS twenty years old in 1917-18 and a school-master. Being naturally of a pious disposition I used to go about from place to place frequently to have darshan of the deities installed in temples. A noble soul who saw this brought to me of his own accord the two books (in Tamil), *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* and *Sri Vivekananda Vijayam,* and asked me to read them. As soon as I had read them I was seized with an intense longing for obtaining the vision of God and for finding out the guru who would show the way to it. While I was engaged in this search I heard about the extraordinary greatness of Bhagavan Sri Ramana through a holy person whom I happened to meet at Sriperumbudur. On 2nd May 1918, I saw Sri Ramana for the first time at Skandasramam on Arunachala.

I beseeched him fervently thus: "It is my great desire that I should actually experience your gracious wisdom. Kindly fulfil my desire." In those days Sri Ramana was not speaking much. Still he spoke kindly as follows: "Is it the body in front of me which desires to obtain my grace? Or is it the awareness within it? If it is the awareness, is it not now looking upon itself as the body and making this request? If so, let the awareness first of all know its real nature. It will then automatically know God and my grace. The truth of this can be realised even now and here."



Besides speaking thus, he also expl it as follows through my own exper "It is not the body which desires to the grace. Therefore it is clear that awareness which shines here as 'you you who are of the nature of awar there is no connection during sleep the body, the senses, the vital airs an mind. On waking up you identify yo with them, even without your knowi This is your experience. All that you to do hereafter is to see that you d identify yourself with them in the sta waking and dream also and to try to re yourself as in the state of deep sleep you are by nature unattached you ha convert the state of ignorant deep sle which you were formless and unatta into conscious deep sleep. It is onl

doing this that you can remain established in your real nature. You should never forget that this experience will come only through long practice. This experience will make it clear that your real nature is not different from the nature of God."

III

Beyond Categories

By

"Sein"

THERE is one section of the devotees of Bhagavan who attach great importance to his being an avatar, while others overlook or even deny such overemphasis. Why should we worry? We know that he is more than an Avatar. Indeed, Bhagavan himself once said : ' The Jnani is more than an avatar."

There are Hindus who make much of his being a Hindu. Of course, he was brought up a Hindu. He participated in a certain amount of Hindu ritual. But then, as others point out, he did not exclusively advocate Hindu ritual or expect any of his followers to become Hindus. What does it matter? He was more than a Hindu.

Even within Hinduism, was he a Brahmin or a sannyasi? Once again, what does it matter? He was brought up a Brahmin ; he left his family and came to Arunachala ; but he never took sannyas. He himself declared that he was '*athiāsrami*', outside the castes and categories, neither Brahmin nor non-Brahmin, neither householder nor sannyasi.

Was he a Guru? He gave no formal initiation, he sometimes denied that he was a guru, but he joined in singing 'Ramana Sat-Guru', and many experienced his Grace and guidance and still do.

Did he teach prayer and belief in God? He said that it is always good to pray and that without God's Grace even the movement of a blade of grass is impossible ; but on another occasion, speaking to a different type of person, he said : "Why worry about God? Let him worry about himself ; find out who it is that asks whether there is a God."

I do not wish to argue that Bhagavan was a Hindu or not a Hindu, an Avatar or not an Avatar. a theist or a nontheist ; what I say is that his purpose was to divert our minds from all forms and categories to the pure Truth of the Self. Let us not waste our time trying to define what Bhagavan was but try to follow him to what IS.

Many great Teachers throughout the ages have set up signposts to the Truth, but what multitudes have gathered around these signposts and built churches and temples there, marvelling how beautifully they were painted, and forgetting that they were only indicators to the Truth beyond. Therefore Bhagavan constantly warned us not to be enthralled by the beauty of any path or any scripture but to turn our minds inwards to find out who it is that follows the path or scripture. All the signposts point to the One Truth, and that is to be found within. That is why Bhagavan said that Truth is simple but men do not want truth, they want mystery. Let us, therefore sacrifice to Bhagavan the mind that seeks to build doctrines and turn instead to the simplicity of Truth that is the very Self of us.

"My obeisance to Thee
I bow down to Thee, O Lord !
Thou facest the south.
Thou art the Ancient One. I bow down to Thee.
Thou art Supreme. I bow down to Thee.
Thou art Mighty. I bow down to Thee
Thou art Time. I bow down to Thee.
Thou art the Word that is in the beginning. I bow down to Thee.
Thou art the Ruler of the mind. I bow down to Thee."

—*Yajur Veda.*

THE VEDAPARAYANA

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

(*Continued from our last Issue*)

BHRIGU VALLI
(Section dealing with Bhrigu)

May (Brahman) protect both of us. May (Brahman) sustain both of us. May we work together intensely. May our study be illuminating. Let us not bear illwill towards each other.

OM PEACE ! PEACE ! PEACE !

The celebrated Bhrigu , son of Varuna, approached his father Varuna saying : " Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman ". The (father) told him " Food, the vital forces (prana), the eyes, the ears, the mind and speech ". He added : " That from which these beings are born, that by which those that are born live, that into which they completely go back on departing (from this world), try to know that. That is Brahman."

He (Bhrigu) practised austerities (*tapas* ; deep and intense thinking). After practising *tapas* he came to the conclusion that food was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of food, that those that were born lived on food and that they completely went back to food on departing (from this world). Having realized this he (again) approached his father Varuna saying : " Revered Sir, tell me about Brahman." The (father again) said to him ; " Seek to know Brahman through *tapas* : *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that the vital forces were Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of the vital forces ; that those that were born lived by the vital forces and that they completely went back to the vital forces on departing (from his world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying : " Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." The (father again) said to him : " Try to know Brahman through *tapas* ; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that mind (*manas*) was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these were really born of mind, that those that were born lived by mind and that they completely went back into mind on departing (from this world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying : "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." (The father again) said to him : "Try to know Brahman through *tapas* ; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that the intellect (*vijnana*) was Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings were really born of the intellect, that those that were born lived by the intellect and that they completely went back to the intellect on departing (from this world). Having realized this he again approached his father Varuna saying : "Revered Sir, please tell me about Brahman." (The father again) said to him : "Try to know Brahman through *tapas* ; *tapas* is Brahman."

He (again) practised *tapas* and, having practised *tapas*, came to the conclusion that bliss is Brahman. For (he thought that) all these beings are really born of bliss, that those that are born live by bliss and that they completely go back to bliss on departing (from this world). This is the esoteric knowledge (*vidya*) of Bhrigu son of Varuna. It is established in the highest *vyoman* (ether or space ; Brahman). He who knows this is firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should not be despised. This should be observed as a vow (pious resolution). *Prana* indeed is food. The body is the eater of food. The body is established on *Prana*, *Prana* is established on the body. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food is firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should not be wasted. This should be observed as a vow. Water, indeed, is food. Fire (*lit.* effulgence ; *jyoti*) is the eater of food. Fire is established on water ; water is established on fire. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food becomes firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

Food should be kept in abundance. This should be observed as a vow. The earth, indeed, is food. *Akasa* (space) is the eater of food. Space is established on the earth ; the earth is established on space. Therefore food is established on food. He who knows this food which is established on food becomes firmly established. He becomes the possessor of food as well as the eater of food. He becomes great by virtue of his progeny, cattle and the lustre of his spiritual knowledge. He becomes very famous.

One should not turn away anybody who comes to his house. This should be observed as a vow. Therefore plenty of food should be obtained (and stored) by some means or other. "The food has been prepared", says (the host). If the food is prepared with great care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with great care. If the food is prepared with middling care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with middling care. If the food is prepared with little care it will be prepared (for the host also elsewhere) with little care. He who knows this (obtains the benefits mentioned above).

Brahman is to be meditated upon as safety (*kshema*) in speech, as the acquisition and preservation of wealth (*yoga kshema*) in *prana* and *apana*, in the form of relief in the anus. These are the methods of meditation in respect of the body. Now in regard to what is divine, (Brahman is to be meditated

upon as) contentment in rain, as force (or strength) in lightning, as fame in cattle, as lustre in the stars, as the imperishable bliss of progeny in the generative organ and as everything (all) in space (*akasa*). If one meditates upon it as support he obtains support. If one meditates upon it as great (*maha*) he becomes great. If one meditates upon it as mind (*manah*) he acquires the power of thinking. If one meditates upon it as obeisance (*namah*) all desires bow down before him. If one meditates upon it as Brahma (the Vedas) he becomes the knower of the Vedas. If one meditates upon it as the destructive power of Brahma (*Brahmanah parimarah*) his enemies and rivals die around him.

He who is in this man and he who is in the Sun are one. One who knows this transcends the body of food (*annamaya atma*), transcends the body of vital forces (*pranamaya atma*), transcends the body of mind (*manomaya atma*), transcends the body of the intellect (*vijnanamaya atma*), transcends the body of bliss (*anandamaya atm* and wanders about this world eating w he likes and wearing what he likes, sing this *saman* (song) : " Ha ! Uha ! Uha ! I am the food, I am the food, I am the fo I am the eater of food, I am the eater of fo I am the eater of food. I am the one w puts everything together (creates), I am one who puts everything together, I am one who puts everything together. I was b of *Rta* (the eternal law of the universe) e before the gods. I am the centre (*nabhi*) immortality. He who gives me away sa me thereby. I am the food and I eat eater of food. I overcome the entire wo My splendour is equal to that of the Su

May (Brahman) protect both of us. M It sustain both of us. Let us work toge intensely. May our studies be illuminat Let us not bear illwill towards each oth

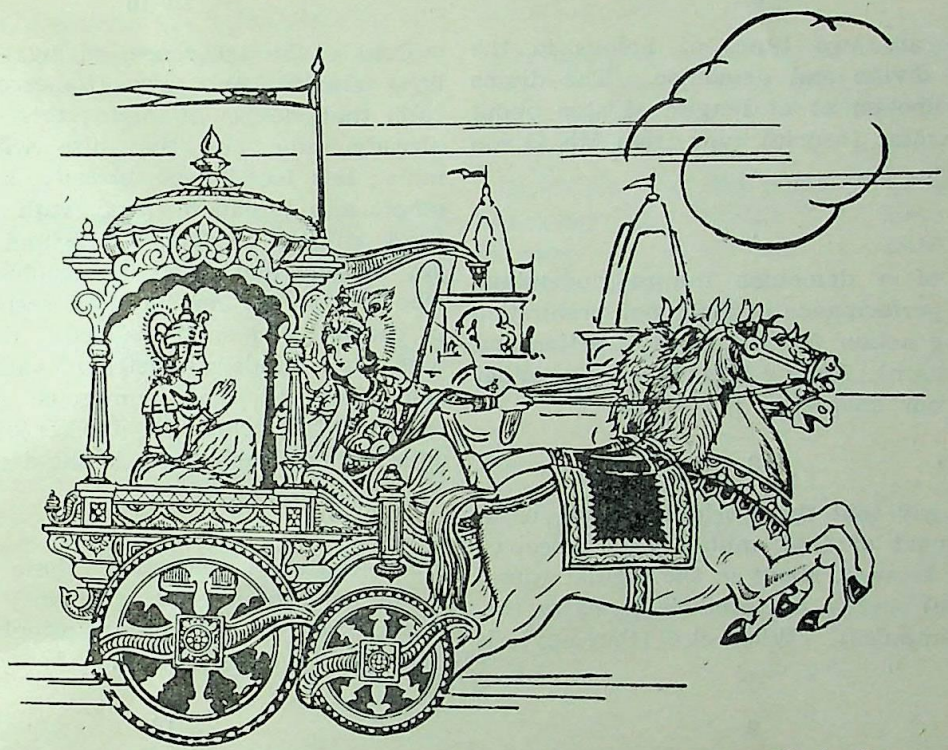
OM PEACE ! PEACE ! PEACE !

(To be continued)

Telepathy

By V. Venkataraman

I once searched for the Tamil dictionary to look up a word in a text that Bhagavan had told me to copy out. Before I could do so he suddenly looked at me and told me the meaning of the word both generally and in that context, although I had never mentioned what word I wanted to look up. It often happened with me, as with other devotees, that the moment a thought crossed my mind he was aware of it, and there was no need to tell him about it.



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1-3

O Bharata, one born with virtues of a divine nature is endowed with fearlessness, absolute purity of mind, establishment in the serenity of wisdom, charity, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, penance, straightforwardness, non-violence, truth, freedom from wrath, resignation, peace (of mind), absence of malice, compassion towards beings, non-attachment (to sensual pleasures), softness, gentility, want of indiscretion, brilliance, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, lack of hatred and absence of undue pride,

4

While one born with properties of a demoniac nature is marked by hypocrisy, arrogance, pride (self-conceit), anger, harshness and ignorance, O son of Pritha.

5

It is deemed that attributes of a divine nature lead one to salvation, while those of a demoniac nature to bondage.

6

There are two types of beings in the world — divine and demoniac. The divine type is spoken of at length. Listen about the demoniac (asuric) type from Me, O son of Pritha.

7

Men of a demoniac nature understand neither performance of right nor prohibition of wrong action (or the ways of action and renunciation). Among them, there is neither purity, nor character, nor truth.

8

They say that the world is unreal, baseless, devoid of God, mutually ill-conceived (or not brought about in the regular causal sequence) and is the product of desire (i.e. sexual impulse). What else (they say), is there ?

9

Holding such views, these wretched souls of little understanding perform fierce actions, and ill-disposed, lead the world to chaos.

10

These (men) of impure vows, obsessed by insatiable passion, full of hypocrisy, self-conceit and self-intoxication, adopting false doctrines through confusion, set out to act (accordingly).

11

Entertaining endless desires resulting in death, they consider the enjoyment of the objects of sense as the highest good, being cocksure of the same as the highest purpose (of life).

12

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of hope, desire and anger, they seek to amass wealth by unjust means for the sake of enjoying the objects of sense.

13-16

Deluded by ignorance, saying, "Toda have attained this and (tomorrow) s fulfil that desire of mine ; this wealt already mine and that also will bec mine ; this foe I have already killed others also I shall do away with. I am Lord, enjoyer, perfect, strong and happ am wealthy and born in a noble fam who else is like me ? I shall sacrifice, in charity and shall rejoice," these with their minds distracted in various and involved in numerous delus extremely attached to the enjoyment objects, reach their doom in the deepest

17

Self-conceited and stiff, these weal proud and intoxicated (persons) perf sacrifices only in name with ostentation without observing rituals.

18

Resorting to egoism, force, pride, pa and anger, these malicious persons hate dwelling in their own bodies, as well those of others.

19

Into demoniac wombs alone, I forever these cruel haters, degenerate and un to be reborn in the world.

20

These fools, O son of Kunti, born demoniac wombs again and again, reach fallen condition without coming to Me

21

This is the threefold gate to hell lea to one's ruin : Passion, Anger and G Therefore one should abandon this tri

22

A man free from these three, O s Kunti, works out his own good and reaches the highest state.

23

He who abandons the injunctions of the scriptures and behaves according to the impulses of his desires, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the highest state of salvation.

24

Let the Scripture, therefore, be your authority in deciding what is right and what is wrong action. Having understood the words of the scriptural injunction, you should act in this world.

('Scripture' is defined as that which gives pure means of attaining the purpose of life and also states the contrary ones which defile this purpose.)

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita entitled '*The Yoga of the Division of Attributes of Divine and Demoniac Natures*'.

Who am I?

By G. N. Daley

Whence came I ——
Body, mind and consciousness
Becoming what ?
What can become ——
When all is NOW
And seer-seen are ONE ?

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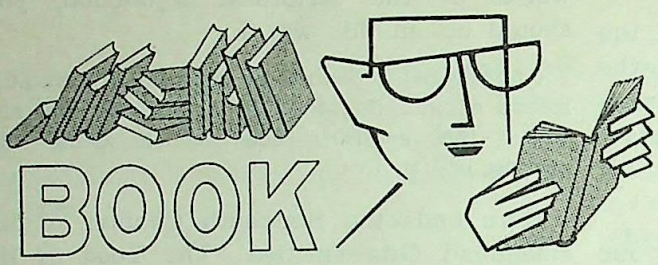
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REVIEWS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PANCHARATRA: By Dr. S. R. Bhatt, Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pp. 136. Price: Rs. 5.

Dr. Bhatt studies the school of Pancharatra — a notable system of Thought and Discipline in the Vaishnava Cult — with a view to prove that its philosophy is more *advaitic* (monist) than normally conceded. In fact the popular understanding is that this system is wholly of *visishtadvaita* persuasion; the present work seeks to show it is not so and that there are fundamental differences between the philosophy and practice of the Pancharatra and the teachings of Ramanuja.

In giving a historical account of the Pancharatra and the salient features of the system e.g. Parabrahman, Vyuha Manifestation, Concept of Lakshmi 'who subsists but not exists', Avatara, Antaryamin, Archa, Dr. Bhatt dwells at length on the treatment of the Absolute, the Reality (Transcendental) — both in the earlier Narayaniya and the later Samhitas — in terms that remind one of the descriptions of Nirguna Brahman in the Upanishads and considers this as sufficient evidence of the *advaitic* character of the philosophy. He does not take due notice of the descriptions in the same texts of the other aspects of the Reality which would warrant a totally different interpretation if taken by themselves. Infact, like most Indian systems in Agamic tradition, here too the Reality is presented in more ways than one in keeping with its integral character. All ways of being, monistic, partially monstic, pluralistic, can be affirmed of the Reality as verified in spiritual experience.

There is much in this book that throws light on the concepts of *vyuha, avatara, prapatti, sakti* etc. but the spirit of approach and presentation is too one-sided to invite serious study of the book. We do not think the author is right in his remarks on Ramanuja's appreciation of the role of render, Grace and Bhakti.

THE ENCOUNTER OF MAN AND NATU By Seyyed Hoosein Nasr, Allen and Unwin London. Pp. 151. Price: 30 sh.

The theme of this book is best stated in words of the author: "Although science is le mate in itself, the role and function of sc and its application have become illegitimate even dangerous because of the lack of a h form of knowledge into which science coul integrated and the destruction of the sacred spiritual value of nature. To remedy this situ the metaphysical knowledge pertaining to n must be revived and the sacred quality of n given back to it once again." (p. 14)

In a cogent exposition of his study o problem, Dr. Nasr traces the growing di between the mind of man and life in N under the influence of Positive Sciences in West. He points out how the spiritual conte the older Knowledge relating to Nature, bo the East and the Middle-East, has been grad displaced by sciences that give the 'knowl of accidents but not of the substance', Philosophy has become a mere reflection Science, Christian Theology has become in dual-centred and moved away from the co of Mother-Nature. He pleads for a revaluatio the factors that enter into the study of God, and Nature. "There is no peace possible am men unless there is peace and harmony nature. And in order to have peace and harm with nature one must be in harmony and eq brium with Heaven, and ultimately with Source and Origin of all things. He who peace with God is also at peace with His creat both with nature and with man."

A well-thought thesis commending itself every serious mind.

INDIA IN THE TIME OF PATANJALI: By B. N. Puri, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 272. Price: Rs. 20.

In seeking to reconstruct the political and social history of India on the basis of the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali (commentary on the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini the grammarian), Dr. Puri has drawn upon several corroborative sources like the accounts of contemporary foreign visitors, pillar inscriptions, literary works of other celebrities etc. Whether he agrees with the conclusions of other scholars or not he has mentioned their views in adequate detail. The author holds that Patanjali lived in 150 B.C., he was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, he was from the North, and that he was not the same person who wrote the Yoga Sutras.

Working with skill and discrimination, Dr. Puri draws an extensive picture of the geographical and economic lay-out of the country as suggested by the observations, illustrations and citations in the writings of Patanjali. The chapters on Educational life and Religious conditions are specially well done. Literature, art and architecture are also covered in detail. Here and there there are peeps into the occult side of things e.g. "For the vital airs of a young man mount upwards to leave his body when an elder approaches; but by rising to meet him and saluting he recovers them." (MB. 6.1.84)

M. P. PANDIT.

TRANCE AND POSSESSION STATES: Edited by Raymon Prince. Published by R. M. Bucke Memorial Society, Montreal, Canada. Pp. 200 Price: Not stated.

Such terms as Trance, Possession, Obsession, Suggestion, Hypnotism and the like have been too long left to pseudo-definition and application. While scientists have regarded them with contempt, religionists have looked upon them with compassionate condescension. The modern cynic, who is interested in neither, has tolerated such states with supercilious complacency, tolerating them as victims of delusions.

The R. M. Bucke Memorial Society which is devoted to the study of areas common to religion and psychiatry, with particular reference to the state of mystical or transcendental states of consciousness, has in this valuable publication brought out the detailed proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Society held in March 1966. The conference has clearly brought out the conclusion that native explanations of spirit possession, generally involved elements of fantasy, and that there are in fact no such things as disembodied agencies which mount their devotees, and cause them to behave in the manner we have heard described time and again.

Contemporary middle class opinion usually dismissed the spirits, and regarded them as primitive interpretations of social, psychological or physiological forces. But, in the sacred books and the dogma of the higher religions which form a basic root of our culture, the belief in spirits is clearly evident. It therefore poses a difficult problem to the modern mind and this timely publication has tackled this difficult subject in a scholarly manner.

One salient question brought out by the conference is that possession states are to the more archaic forms of religious life, what mystic states are to its more evolved forms. By expanding our knowledge on the nature of possession states and primitive religions, this book has not only focussed the arc-light on the more primitive states but also illuminated the meaning and function of mystical states. For, does not one know that beneath man's thin veneer of consciousness lies a relatively uncharted realm of mental activity, the nature and function of which have been neither systematically explored nor adequately conceptualised?

Despite numerous studies by scholars and psychologists from the days of Freud on day-dreaming, sleep and dream-states, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, hysterical states or dissociation and depersonalisation, pharmacologically-induced mental aberrations and so on, there has been little attempt made to organize this scattered information within the framework of a comprehensive theoretical system. The objective of the present publication is to integrate and discuss current knowledge of various altered states of consciousness and they have been discussed under the following heads, namely:—

(1) The conditions necessary for their emergency;

(2) The factors which influence their outward manifestation;

(3) Their relatedness and or common denomination, and

(4) The adaptive or maladaptive functions which they serve.

Analysis of hypnosis has been ably undertaken in this study by Peter H. Van Der Walde, Instructor in Psychiatry in Boston University, which reveals certain basic characteristics of the Phenomenon. These elements comprising individual, inter-personal and cultural variables have

been utilised by the professor (p. 3) in a trans-cultural comparison so as to demonstrate the fact that trance phenomena are goal-oriented behaviours expressed by individuals within a given culture by methods which are culturally sanctioned for achieving these ends. If there are differences between trance states they can be taken as representing cultural variants of similar psychological mechanisms.

Arnold Ludwig, in his paper on altered states of consciousness, refers to William James' description of subjective experience associated with such alterations and quoting his description of "The Charm of Drunkenness", remarks that 'loss of self-control' and 'grip on reality' also happen in the case of mystical, revelatory or spirit-possession states, where the individual relinquishes such control in the hope of experiencing divine truth, clairvoyance, cosmic consciousness, communion with spirits or supernatural powers, all in the hope of serving as temporary abode of Gods. He adds:

> "Although this feeling of increased significance and import may be encountered during dressing, hypnosis, aesthetic experiences, creative states and auras preceding seizures it also represents consciousness, whether that state of consciousness is induced by 'natural' or by 'artificial' means (i.e. peyote, LSD, marijuana and various anaesthetics). I would surmise that this 'raw' sense of significance, which lends import and conviction to the 'revelations' attained during mystical consciousness or religious possession states, has been a major factor in the stabilisation of many religions, sects and cults."

Throughout history, one must have noted that altered states of consciousness have played a major role in various healing arts and practices. One has only to go back to what Socrates has remarked in the Phaedrus where he remarks: "Our greatest blessings come to us by way of madness." Socrates has defined four types of divine madness, i.e., altered states of consciousness. These are (a) prophetic madness, whose patron is Apollo; (b) telestic or ritual madness, whose patron is Dionysus; (c) poetic madness, inspired by the Muses; and (d) erotic madness, inspired by Aphrodite and Eros.

While modern psychologists may glibly debate the rational justification of such activities or dismiss the scientific validity of their concomitant theologists, this book has emphasised the fact that the devotees do believe in things spiritual and that they do endeavour to relate them to their deities in the most favourable way. T intentions and their beliefs are very real fac in the causation of their behaviour. The au have rightly dismissed any elaborate explana overlooking the general psychology of religio inadequate an account of possession states a description of a painting by one who is co blind or analysis of music by one wh stone-deaf.

PHILOSOPHY FOR EVERYMAN: By Dag D. Runes. The Philosophical Library, New Y Pp. 148. Price: $ 4.75.

This small, but comprehensive volume pre a panorama of the great philosophers of all from Socrates to Sartre, tracing their backgr and impact on modern civilization. As man ever expanding interests to guide him, rema mystery to himself, it has become necessar him to seek such crutches as super-na instructions to reveal his ignorance, order hi and regulate his interests along with the sci which serve him. This handbook of philoso thought is helpful to the extent that it des the decline and fall of the supernatural in tion as it not only lacks historical justificatio ignores the other side of the human being, ly, that part of him which for all his igno declares his needs and obligation to independently, to choose and remain free a cope, however poorly, with the problem of

There is no gainsaying the fact that ho much science may have progressed, with a energies of the people whipped into "ac human life is surely deprived of all value man is able to withdraw into himself and sider quality, direction and intent of his and this in short is the message of this publi of less than one hundred and forty pages, offers a clear comprehension of the fundam theories and issues that have kept think oriental and occidental — from the days of 600 B.C. down to Otto Neurath and Jean Sartre. Throughout this long period, philos have been divided into those who have w to tighten the social bonds and others who ed to relax them. When the disciplinarians cated some system of 'Dogma' and the were being compelled to oppose scienc 'Libertarians' (we use Bertrand Russel's p have tended to be scientific, utilitarian, re and hostile to violent passion and enemies more profound forms of religion. This existed even in pre-Socrates' Greece a changing forms it has persisted to the p

day and will surely persist for many ages to come. It is this conflict and anguish that underlines man's intense awareness to his contingency and freedom which is the keynote of existentialism, on which note the book ends.

Rightly has the author titled the book "Philosophy *for* Everyman"; for the uniqueness of man has created the obscurity of philosophy. Each individual sees 'truth' as a function of his own becoming, of his own private rhythms and break-throughs which are unpredictable. As 'truth' is an act of his being it will accordingly never have a precise identity with the truths discerned by every other man. Philosophic truth must always be chosen, not borrowed or accepted from tradition.

As down the ages man remains uncertain as to what he has really chosen, the act of choosing must be performed over and over again, and it is this effort of man that D. D. Runes has described in detail in this interesting book which can serve eminently as a philosophic reference manual.

ARGUS.

SEQUEL TO THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE: By H. S. Spencer and others. Compiled and edited by Tony Rigsdale Sherwood. Publishers: S. V. Vaswani, 1 Rajkamal, 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona-2. Pp. 181. Price: Rs. 10.

As the title of the book announces, this compilation of essays is meant to supplement the main work of Hormusjee Shapoorjee Spencer entitled: "The Mysteries of God in the Universe." In the present work, only the Preface is his contribution — illuminating pieces of philosophical disquisitions.

Though the title is couched in general terms, the essays deal mainly with the all-engrossing subject of reincarnation. Christ is quoted to have said that John the Baptist was Elijah. Prophets and philosophers alike — Buddha, Pythagoras, Plato and Goethe among others — have accepted the thesis. The belief has been erected into a solid structure of closely reasoned doctrine.

The great Parsi scholar, Dastur Khurshed S. Dabu, expounds, with chapter and verse and with all his deep learning, the doctrine of reincarnation in Zoroastrianism. Reincarnation, however, should not be deemed one of the basic tenets of the Zoroastrian religion.

In his Preface, Spencer rises to heights of pure inspiration in his essay: "Aum Tat Sat — Tat Twam Asi". These are, he points out, the great fundamental Mantras of Existence — and existence is the most fundamental fact.

In Hormazd Yasht, God, while giving His names to Holy Zarathustra, says: "My First Name is I AM."

The quotation shows how near is Zoroastrianism, in its essential tenets, to the Gita and the Upanishads.

And how near is Christ: "Be Ye holy as I AM holy. Be ye Universal as I AM universal."

And Ramana Maharshi: "The jnani knows that the Self is the only Reality."

Spencer soars to rare eloquence in his conclusion: "It is the affirmation of Oneness with God which is the panacea for all the present-day ills of the world. Men have forgotten the source from which they come . . . the Soul is everything and the only True Self in Man . . ."

Knowing this one and only Truth, my dear Spencer, why should the books in the series be entitled "Mysteries"?

ZOROASTER'S INFLUENCE ON GREEK THOUGHT: By Ruhi Muhsen Afnan. Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 436. Price: $7.50.

The book is a most beautiful and masterly exposition of the way by which even the intellect can arrive at Truth just as faith can. The proviso is that the intellect in question should be illumined by, and identified with, the Eternal Self. All the postulates that flow from this illumination become automatically Eternal Truth; for the Eternal Self is the one and only Eternal Truth.

This is not what Afnan says in so many words, but this is the inevitable conclusion.

Afnan shows, through a well-reasoned logical sequence, the close proximity of religion and culture when both are viewed in the broadest sense. "Religion", he says, "is the revelation of God's purpose in stimulating the spiritual and cultural growth of man."

And he adds: "Culture is the sum-total of these higher values and institutions that effect and guide that growth."

All deductive logic is not faulty. Induction alone, it may be argued, based on mathematical precision of data collected by individual instances, can lead to scientific truth. But deduction, too, can be no less scientific if based on the uniformity of nature and human experience. Faith, too, says Afnan, ceases to be blind when it is not only asserted but verified by experience.

Afnan visualises four ways of arriving at the ultimate reality:

(a) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the nature of mind and knowledge but separate from physical nature and transcendent to it, the path is through idealistic culture;

(b) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the mind and knowable but also immanent in nature, naturalistic culture shows the way;

(c) When the ultimate reality is conceived to be in the nature of spirit and unknowable but immanent in the human soul and physical nature, the culture becomes mysticism; and

(d) When the ultimate reality is conceived as the spirit but transcendent to the human soul and physical nature, this becomes religion in the form of a revelation establishing the relation between God and man.

One of the most illustrious exponents of Greek thought was Plato and to him reality did not dwell in appearance or 'image' or 'shadows'. This is also the famous Kantian dichotomy of phenomena (appearance of reality), and noumena, the realities themselves.

Reality, according to Plato, is "the unchanging and universal Form, Idea or conception located in the intellectual world, which is identified with the human soul."

Zoroaster, says Afnan, was a contemporary of early Greek thinkers. The former expounded a religion divine in origin through faith and the Gatha hymns, while the latter sought truth rationally.

But the difference is superficial. Afnan observes the close resemblance of the Platonic identification of Good with God and Zoroaster's deification of the Amesha Spentas, who are natural bodies.

The right book to understand the pure of Zoroastrianism.

G. R. Kapa

ST. THYAGARAJA, THE DIVINE SINGER Kaviyogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bh Shuddhananda Library, Yoga Samaj, Madr pp. 60, Price Rs. 1.50.

This small book contains a good deal of mation which will be of interest to love South Indian or Carnatic music, espe admirers of the great saint-singer Thyag It gives brief accounts of the various e associated with his life and the circumstan which several of his songs were composed number of his well-known songs are repro in Roman characters and their meaning giv the benefit of those who are not familiar the Telugu script and language. The book signs of hasty writing and inadequate re There are also numerous printing mistake

SRI VENKATESWARA: The Lord of the Hills, Tirupati: By P. Sitapati, Bha Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 209, Rs. 2.50.

This is neither a guide book proper nor tical account of the famous shrines of T and Tirumalai in Andhra Pradesh. The a has collected a good deal of information books and other sources, but he has not br out an interesting and readable book. It re some patience and ingenuity on the part reader to co-ordinate the various bits of inf tion scattered throughout the book. There however, some fine photographs.

M. C. Subraman

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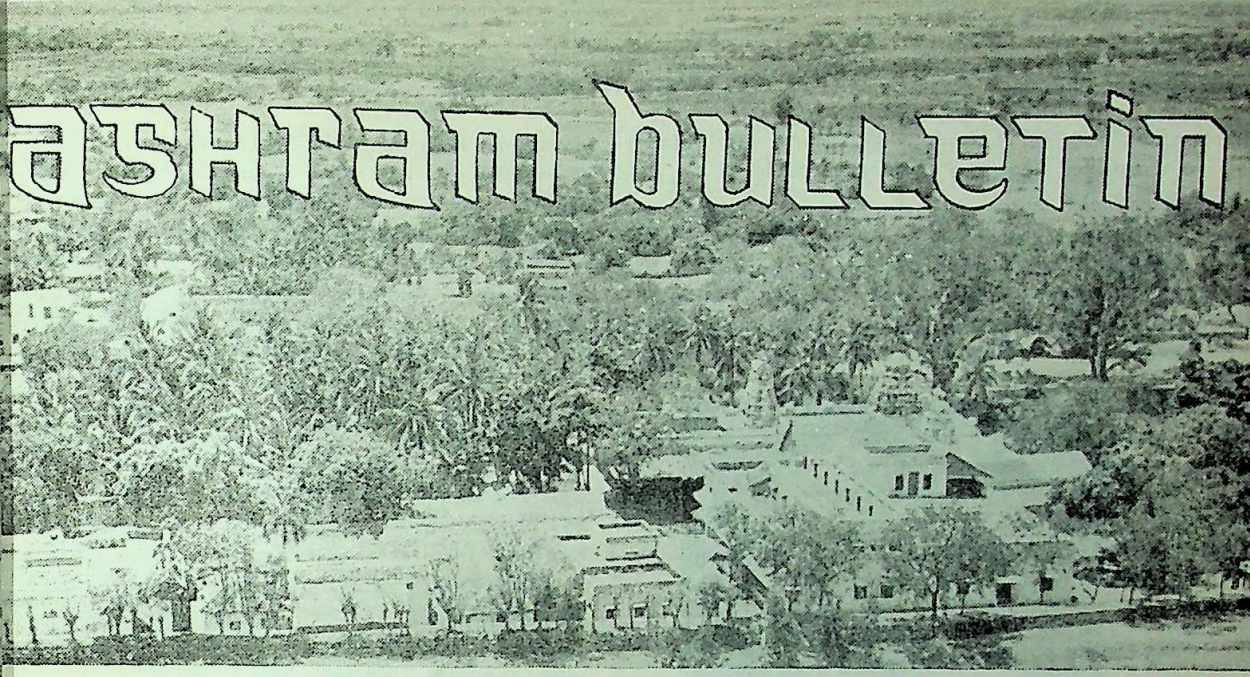
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SRI RAMANA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

AT THE ASHRAM

THE eighty-ninth jayanti or birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at His shrine on 4th January 1969 in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. The day started with Mahanyasam (the consecration of the waters) and was followed by Vedaparayana (the chanting of Taittiriya Upanishad) by a group of persons well-versed in chanting. Next came the puja at the shrine with the pouring of the consecrated waters over Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam and the decoration of the lingam with flowers, clothes, etc. A sahasranama, or the offering of flowers and bilva leaves to the accompaniment of the one thousand sacred names of Sri Bhagavan followed this. Then came the final ceremony in which lights burning camphor, etc. were waved before the linga. South Indian temple music was played by a fine band at appropriate intervals. The puja was followed by the usual feasting of visitors and devotees. A large number of poor persons were also fed, as usual. In the afternoon there was a discourse in Tamil by Sri Kumaraswami Dikshitar. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Regional Director, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, spoke about the spiritual path shown by Sri Bhagavan. The films of Sri Bhagavan taken during his life time were exhibited in the night. The celebrations attracted a larger crowd than usual this year.

AT RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The Jayanti was celebrated on January 5. After Vedaparayana and Upadesa Saram, Sri Ramdhari Sinha 'Dinkar', the Hindi poet, gave a talk, describing the state of a jnani who is one with



DELHI : Sri Ramdhari Sinha speaking at the Ramana Jayanthi celebrations.

the Self and neither recognizes nor disowns any act performed by him. Devotees knew that Maharshi did perform miracles. A Nepalese Raj-Guru found only Maharshi when he visited the temple. Others had got over their difficulties by just remembering Bhagavan and declared that he appeared before them and saved them mira-

culously from calamitous situations. But Maharshi insisted that the greatest miracle of all is to realize the Self.

Maharshi's friendliness with animals was remarkable. He knew them intimately and they had immense faith in him, for they knew beyond doubt that he was absolutely non-violent and would do them no harm. On his shoulders



birds perched; monkeys sat by his side in peace; snakes felt at ease even while creeping on him. The monkey chiefs came to him for settling their disputes. The cow Lakshmi's behaviour towards him would suggest that she had known him even in previous lives.

The Maharshi gave no quarter to unhappiness. He would say, "When you feel unhappy, ask the question, who feels the pain and pleasure?"

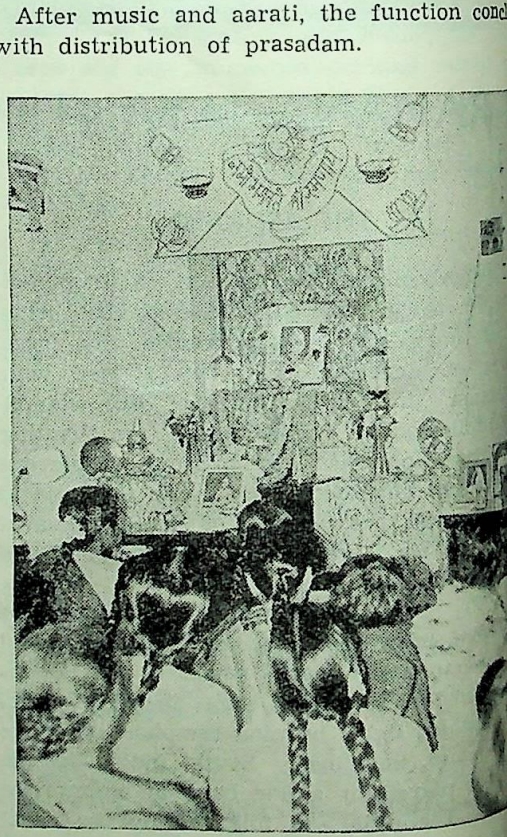
Everyone is happy while in deep sleep. ... is because our real state is one of happiness ... while asleep we are not aware of our body ... its surroundings which were the cause of ... so-called unhappiness during our wakeful ...

The life of those who do not believe in a... jnana is full of sorrow riddled with probl... When they get atma-jnana they live in peace ... find every problem easy of solution.

Continuous sadhana, the vichara-marga ... taught by Maharshi, brings one nearer and n... to self-realization. The progress may not ... apparent to the sadhaka; none-the-less, he g... steadily upwards and there is no going ... for him.

Sri A. K. Iyer gave in Tamil a resume of ... Dinkar's speech.

After music and aarati, the function concl... with distribution of prasadam.



BELGAUM: Devotees singing 'Raman... Sad-Guru' at the Jayanthi celebration...

AT BELGAUM

Ramana Jayanti was celebrated on th... January 1969 with enthusiasm at a well-att... meeting at Shri P. R. Suryanandan's quarte... the Civil Aerodrome, Sambra, Belgaum. ... Vedaparayana and the recitation of *Up... Saram*, songs by Shri Bhagavan, Shri Murug...

Sadhu Om, Kavyakantha and others were sung. The meeting ended with aarati and distribution of prasadam.

AT RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

The Sabha celebrated Ramana Jayanti on 5th January 1969 at Dharmalayam, 94, Mowbrays Rd., Madras-18. After Vedaparayanam, Shri Avvai Natarajan, of the Ramalinga Mission, gave a talk on the experience and philosophy of Bhagavan viewed as the continuation of the long Tamil tradition flowing from Tiruvalluvar throughout the Nayanars and Tayumanavar to Ramalingaswami.

Songs were sung by Mrs. Annamalai, Mrs Lakshmi Sivaraman, Mrs. Natesa Iyer and others. The meeting ended with aarati and distribution of prasadam.

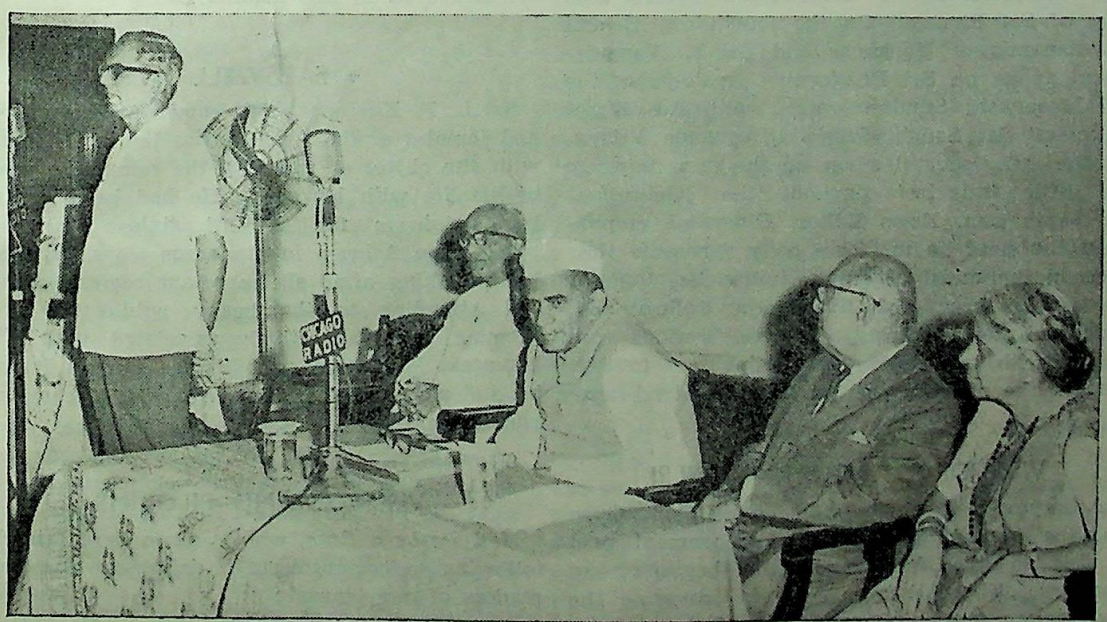
AT SECUNDERABAD

The 89th birthday of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was celebrated by the Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali, Secunderabad, on Sunday the 19th January, 1969 in the new hall of the Gujarati Seva Mandal, Secunderabad. The proceedings began with the singing of Arunachala Siva and *Parayanam* in the morning. In the evening Sri B. K. Bhatt, Professor of Sanskrit, Osmania University, spoke about the passing away of Sri Bhagavan and the events that followed it. Sri C. C. Modi, the well-known retired businessman, next explained briefly the philosophy of Sri Bhagavan. Baba Sri Muktanand Paramahansa of Ganeshpuri who followed him explained lucidly and fully Sri Bhagavan's teachings with particular reference to the first part of the well-known stanza composed by Him and beginning with the words "*Hridaya Kuhara Madhye*". Finally Sri Shivmohanlal, retired Professor of Philosophy, Osmania University, spoke on the path of surrender advocated by Sri Bhagavan as an alternative for those who cannot follow the path of Self-enquiry. Srimati Shanta Sarur entertained the audience with a number of devotional songs. The function came to a close with the distribution of prasad.

AT VIJAYAWADA

Sri Ramana Jayanti was celebrated at Ramana Sadanam, the residence of Suri Nagamma, situated in Maruthi Nagar, Vijayawada, on 5th

RAMANA JAYANTHI AT BOMBAY



The 89th Birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at Bombay in all grandeur. Photo: Sri Shantikumar J. Bhatt speaks. Seated are (l. to r.) Sri Jamnadas K. Ladiwala, Sri V. S. Page (Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council, who presided over the function), Sri Nariman D. Sahukar and Mrs. Mani Sahukar.

January 1969, in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. Sri Ramana Ashtotharam, Sahasranamam and Taittiriya Upanishad were recited and prasadams distributed in the morning. In the evening *Upadesa Saram* was recited. This was followed by talks on Sri Bhagavan's teachings by Sri S. V. L. Narasimham, Principal, Vidya Niketan, and Sri B. Hanumantha Rao. The celebrations concluded with Arunachala Sankeertan and the distribution of prasadams.

AT MADURAI

The 89th Jayanti of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was celebrated from 1st January to 5th January 1969 at Sri Ramana Mandiram situated in Chokappa Naicken Street, Madurai. Sri A. R. Raghavachari, Joint Director of the well-known firm of Chari and Ram, opened the celebrations with a speech in the course of which he said that every one can become a jnani if he could get rid of his ego, that the life of Sri Ramana is a model for others and that we should do our work with the conviction that everything happens by the will of God. On the second day Sri A. Ramasubramania Sarma spoke about the need to keep always in mind our goal and the grace of the Guru. Sri A. Visvanathan, Additional First Class Magistrate, Madurai, who addressed the devotees on the third day, on 'The Gita and Ramana', explained how the teaching of Sri Krishna agreed with that of Sri Ramana. On the fourth day Swami Shantananda of Haridwar and Sri K. Vanamamalai spoke on Sri Bhagavan's greatness at the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar South Adi Street Devotees' Sat Sangh. Srimati Sivananda Vijayalakshmi sang several songs on the same day. On the fifth and last day of the celebrations Sri Santhanam, News Editor, *Dinamani*, emphasised the need to meditate daily for some time even in the midst of our activities. Sri Ramana Prasad, Lecturer, Sri Thiagaraja College, also addressed the gathering. The celebrations concluded with exhortation to all devotees to take part in the activities of Sri Ramana Mandiram.

* * *

VISIT OF SRI ACHARYA TULSI

Acharya Sri Tulsi, the well-famous Jaina Guru and the founder of the Anuvrata movement, paid a visit to the Ashram in the beginning of January. The Acharya, who is covering the country on foot, propagating the ideals of Jainism and the Anuvrata movement, was passing through Tiruvannamalai and took the opportunity of visiting the Ashram of Sri Bhagavan and meeting the inmates and devotees. He was accompanied by a small band of Jaina monks and some of whom spoke about the mission of Acharya. The Acharya also addressed the gathering for a few minutes. In the course of his he pointed out that apart from Mahavira founder of Jainism, no great Acharya of had been bold enough to give a high stat women and that it was left to Sri Bhag Ramana Maharshi to declare unequivocally women were entitled to seek and obtain Li tion just like men. The Maharshi, he said sublimated his mother's life and enshrined within the Ashram precincts. The speeches Acharya and his followers which were in were interpreted by one of the followers.

* * *

THE DISPENSARY

The Ashram Dispensary, which had ceas function ever since the departure of Dr. K swami Ayyar in 1966, has been opened for the treatment of simple cases of illness a the inmates of the Ashram and the poor pe in the neighbourhood. Dr. K. R. Srini B.Sc., M.B.B.S., D.D., a practising doc Tiruvannamalai, visits the Ashram on We days and Saturdays and attends to patien an hour in the afternoon. We are very gr to him for kindly assisting the devotee Sri Bhagavan in this manner.

* * *

FAREWELL

Sri L. P. Koppikar, well-known to the vi and inmates of the Ashram, has left the As with the object of spending the remaining of his life with his sons. He had been st in the Ashram for the last sixteen years helping the Ashram in numerous ways, esp ly in looking after all important correspon and attending to the heavy publication gramme. He was actively associated with *Mountain Path* ever since it was started. I be difficult to replace him. We wish him a and peaceful life.

* * *

VISITORS AND PILGRIMS

Mrs. Barbara Rose, who is again here, ha following to communicate to fellow-devotees readers of our journal:

Full swing on beloved Arunachala. Yes, w circled a full round with this 'glorious Mou of Love, celebrated by Gautama and each before and since who has been blessed with Darshan.' 'As a lode-stone attracts iron, ma

tizing it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala'.

In August it was red and blasting heat itself, the stillness of unapproachable grandeur — omnipotent Father. 'Oh Undefiled, abide Thou in my heart so that there may be everlasting joy, Arunachala.'

In October it had rained, so the lemon grass was a foot high and playfully blowing its fragrance for each child to catch with glee. 'Play, child, grow; Try, bird, fly; Know, be joy.'

In December brought ripeness of parenthood: two/three foot high stalks laden with heavy grass-flowers borne with maternal graciousness. 'Kinder indeed art Thou than one's mother, such is Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!'

Now in March harvesters pile the quiet brown grass on their heads and moving slowly on their Lord, all at one, descend. 'Let me, Thy prey, surrender unto Thee and be consumed, and so have Peace, Oh Arunachala!'

As for the last scene: the burning black of the Hill as preparation for the next crop — pregnant symbol of this spiritual idyll which unfolds here at this spiritual home of homes which is Bhagavan's Ashram. 'Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, Oh Arunachala!'

* * *

Mr. John B. Dawson, who came from U.S.A. and was referred to in our previous issue, has been with us for the past few months. He wishes to stay for some more months. He says as follows to fellow-devotees:

While touring my native country last year as a musician, I chanced to come across two of Bhagavan's staunchest devotees; after some visits and talks with them, they introduced me to the spiritual world in general, and gave me Bhagavan's photo specifically, in respective order. Then, after a few weeks of prayer and meditation, together with the silent and steady influence of our Master's picture, my job began to take on a new light — that of selfless service to the Lord; gradually the old thoughts became replaced by the driving spirit of desire to obtain His grace first-hand.

To enter the Ashram gates is to be struck by immediate, instant peace. The purity and peace pervading not only the Ashram, but the entire Arunachala area, is more than I have ever experienced, and is far beyond my original ideas of exactly how it would have its effect upon my soul.

Out of the varied and many-sided personalities who have chosen to call it home, the Ashram community itself operates peacefully and smoothly, through efforts on all levels of all; each one derives peace and grace according to his own need, for indeed the Ashram becomes for each one exactly the way he sees it, due to Bhagavan's immense grace, and to the many functions and facilities in it. As Muruganar says in his poem, 'The Sustainer': 'Whatever quality marks you and me — He seems to share alike with you and me—But He is in truth neither this nor that — He simply IS without a particle of any quality'.

For all, however, the same law is in effect: he who attentively pursues his own chosen course of discipline with the qualities of diligence, discrimination, sincerity and cheerfulness, always holding love and regard for one's fellow beings, receives, in due accordance to the level of the manifestation of these qualities in him, the grace of the Lord.



John Dawson

For Bhagavan's grace is none other than our own Self, as He taught many a time. So, always striving to look inwards, pursuing the path so clearly laid down by Him in His teachings, those desirous of obtaining this grace cannot fail to obtain it.

* * *

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Reeder (see *Ashram Bulletin* of January 1969 issue, p. 66), returned from their north India tour and spent a few weeks more at the abode of Sri Bhagavan and with a heavy heart they left for their home land. They said:

'We give no farewell parties here,' one of the devotees said to us, 'because here there are no farewells!' To say good-bye to Bhagavan is surely a paradox, for where is He not? And yet we are regretful to be leaving the Ashram after a short stay of just a few months. In our lives we have found no finer place to practise quiet sitting, where a deep peaceful joy always lies just beneath the surface. Here sadhana is the most natural way to live, and here we begin to sense Bhagavan's great compassion, his grandeur, and his gift of peace to all beings.

The Tamil Spring is short, and any stay at Arunachala, however long, is short too. On leaving we say "Bhagavan! Please bring us back again!"

* * *

Mrs. Annie Alt and *Mr. Gerald H. Stofsky*, the famous pianists, spent a week at the Ashram. They then left for Calcutta to give a concert. Mrs. Alt wrote from there: "I want to tell you that on the last evening in the Ashram I received in the Nirvana room a blessing of Sri Bhagavan which I certainly do not deserve: during meditation suddenly I saw waves of golden light changing to bright white light and again golden and always changing on Sri Bhagavan's face of the picture. I could hardly believe it and I began to test myself but it went on and did not disappear until I had to go out of the room. This experience helped me when I had to leave the Ashram the other morning." Mr. Stofsky wrote: "The Ashram was so wonderful (I should say *is*). The peace and serenity that Sri Bhagavan gives to His children is *more* than words can express!"

* * *

Mrs. J. Guerineau, who is translating some of the works of Sri Bhagavan into French and has been following His teachings for more than two decades, took pains to come to the Ashram all the way from France at the age of 74. She was so kind and affectionate to everyone that her devotion and tranquillity was noticed by everybody. She wished to see Tiruchuzhi, the birth-place of Sri Bhagavan as well as the place at Madurai where he had his famous experience of death. She was therefore taken to these places by our *Managing Editor*. On return from these pilgrim centres Mrs. Guerineau said: "My life's one long cherished wish is fulfilled today!"

* * *

Miss Jane Hiroko Nishi, a Japanese lady, residing in Canada, came to the Ashram at the instance of our devotee, Mrs. deLancey Kapleau (see the *Ashram Bulletin* of Oct. '67, p. 336). She spent a few weeks in contemplation and meditation. She is expected to be back in June.

* * *

Sri Ramesh Chandra Kapoor of Kanpur, who had been with us four years ago, came again and stayed for a fortnight. When he left he said that his stay had helped him very much to understand and follow Sri Bhagavan's teaching. He wishes to come back soon.

* * *

Miss Jacqueline Leprince and *Miss Yvonne Dauguet*, (see *Ashram Bulletin* April 1968 issue, p. 161) are still with us and they continue sadhana as taught by Sri Bhagavan with and perseverance. They wish to stay even through the hot summer!

* * *

The following pilgrims also came from
Mr. David Allan Colston Powell (Britis
Mr. Johannus Jacobus de Reede (Dut
Mr. Van Den Berg (Dutch)
Mr. Frank Maxwell Clift (New Zealan
Mr. & Mrs. Doornekamp (New Zealand)
Mr. Fagan Philip (U.S.A.)
Mr. Wilhelm Hermann Eitel (German)
Mrs. Maria Proske (Austria)
Miss Anne Rowe (British)
Mr. Dietrich Bartels (German)
Miss Nancy Jean Finney (U.S.A.)
Mr. Larry Moody (U.S.A.)
Miss Wendy E. Anderson (U.S.A.)
Mr. Oidier Brasseur (French)

* * *

THE EDITOR

The Editor, Mr. Arthur Osborne, havi
gained his normal health was expected to
to the Ashram by the middle of last month
he has not returned, evidentially he wis
return to India only after the summer is
Two of the articles which had originally
proposed to be included in this issue had
fore, to be held over for the next issue.
'Letters to the Editor' had also to be held

* * *

OBITUARY

Dr. M. 'Rajangam' Krishnamoorthy,
and well-known devotee of Sri Bhagavan,
away on 24th January
at his residence in Tiru-
vannamalai. A native
of Mangudi, he inher-
ited the family title of
'Rajangam' from one
of his ancestors upon
whom the title had
been conferred by a
Chola king in view of
his piety and prowess.
From early years, his
intense attitude for
spiritual endeavour
shaped his devotional
approach with volcanic
emotions. His urge found peace and
with his initial contacts with Sri Bha

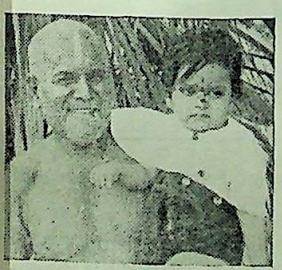


Dr. Krishnam

during 1927 and 1929. As a result of his convincing find of his Master in Him, he came to stay permanently in Tiruvannamalai in 1933, and continued to practise there until old age and ill-health compelled him to relinquish his practice. He used to visit Sri Bhagavan every Sunday at exactly 2 p.m. so much so that he came to be known as the 'Sunday Doctor'! In fact he was so punctual and regular that Sri Bhagavan used to remark occasionally, on seeing him, 'Oh! Today is Sunday?'. The Doctor never came to Sri Bhagavan without bringing some eatable or other to be offered to Sri Bhagavan and then distributed, as usual, among the devotees assembled in the Hall. It was he who, in fact, laid the foundations for the Ashram Dispensary to come, beginning with a deal-wood box in which some first-aid materials were gathered and kept, for the use of the inmates. He had the privilege of being referred to occasionally by Sri Bhagavan as the 'Ashram Doctor'....With the passing of years he had close contacts with Sri Bhagavan and gave best of his time and attention to one and all. His last years were marked by contemplative seclusion and by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, he passed away with His thoughts on Him and in perfect peace. May He rest in Sri Bhagavan's eternal Peace!

* * *

Kumaraswamy Gounder, who came into the fold of the Ashram in 1935, passed away after a brief illness on the 18th of February at his native village of Rangasamudram in Coimbatore district. He was married and had two children; but then, his latent dispositions for a peaceful life and devotion to God, were ostensibly ignited by some sudden family discontent and quarrels that marked his desertion from home, seeking asylum straight into Sri Bhagavan's abode. Calm and unruffled by nature in appearance and temparament, he spent his life here for over three decades, loved by one and all, intimately known and called as *'Anna'* (elder brother). A silent worker and faithful devotee of Sri Bhagavan he was in charge of and looked after the maintenance and routines of the Ashram stores. The daily menu in the kitchen was under his regulated control after making only suggestions to Sri Bhagavan for instructions, which he faithfully and meticulously carried out to the last. This service gave him the opportunity for his own evolution in life as it occasioned his meeting Sri Bhagavan in familiar ease day by day and clock-like at stated times for receiving all instructions and guidance. A devoted servant of Sri Bhagavan, of a hefty physical build brimming with child-like innocence, it is indeed difficult for old devotees here to forget him. One and all the ashramites share the grief on his demise. Sri Kumaraswamy was very fond of the family of the President, especially the children. The President and his entire family feel of having lost one of the old members of their family in the passing away of 'Anna'. May he abide in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!



'Anna' with President's grandson

* * *

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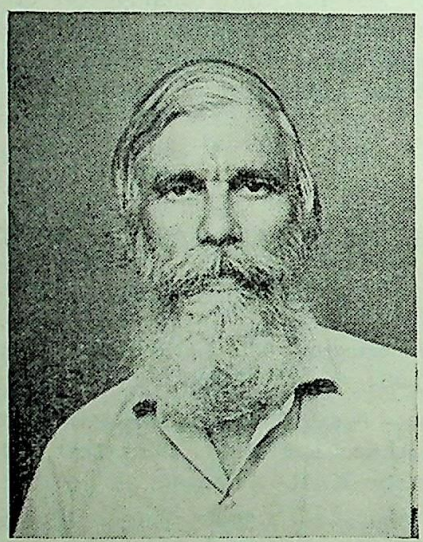
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INTRODUCING.....

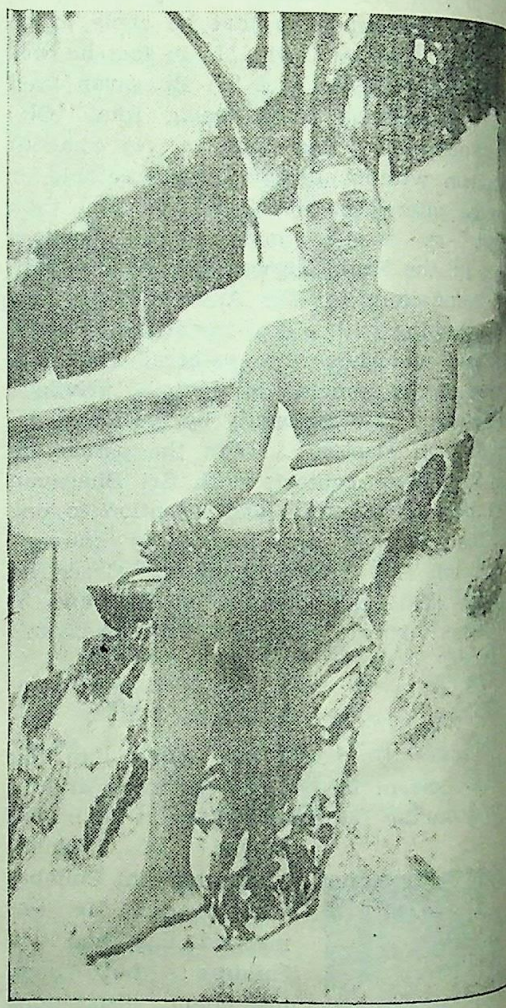
N. NATARAJA

SRI N. NATARAJA IYER, retired Traffic Inspector, Southern Railway, is an old and well-known devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He comes from a pious and orthodox family of Brahmins, his father having been a spiritually advanced soul. Sri Nataraja Iyer himself was of a devotional and religious temperament from his boyhood. He used to visit temples and revere religious and spiritual persons, especially sannyasins. When he was a young man of twenty-two a friend brought to him something to eat (*prasadam*) from Sri



Sri Nataraja Iyer

Ramanasramam, but it never occured to him to ask his friend anything about the Swami of that Ashram. Nor did it occur to him to go and see the Swami on any of his visits to Tiruvannamalai. But a few years later, when one of his relatives spoke to him about Sri Ramana Maharshi whom he had seen, he became immediately interested and went to the Ashram. This was in 1935 when he was only 29 years old. At his very first visit he sat spellbound before Sri Bhagavan for nearly forty-five minutes, much to the annoyance of his friend who had taken him to the Ashram and who had expected him to stay only for a few minutes. Coming out of the Hall he was taken to the *Sarvadhikari* (Sri Niranjanananda Swami) who spoke to him kindly and invited him to stay for lunch. He thus had an opportunity of also taking lunch with Sri Bhagavan. He did not ask any questions but mentally pray-



ed to Sri Bhagavan for relief from some i
which were causing him great anxiety.

This first visit made such a strong imp
upon Sri Nataraja Iyer that he wished, if
ble, to obtain a transfer to Tiruvannam
that he could go and sit in front of Sri Ma
more often. To his immense surprise this t
came about soon under circumstances which
almost miraculous. Having gained his obj
used to go to the Ashram whenever he
duty and sit in Sri Bhagavan's presence. H
came to be well-known to everybody
Ashram, but he never took any liberty w
Bhagavan and never asked him any q
being content with sitting in a corner
when there was some discussion when he
nearer to listen. However, he slowly be

feel that he was improving morally as well as spiritually. Very often he was overcome by tears of esctacy. Meditation also came to him with grea'er and greater ease.

Although he did not particularly aspire to rise in the service he never neglected his official duties. He also knew that Sri Bhagavan would never encourage any one to become indifferent to his duties. Fortunately for him his wife did not stand in his way. In fact she became in course of time a more ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan than himself. Even his small children were greatly devoted to Sri Bhagavan from whom they used to receive small marks of affection and blessing from time to time. After three years of such peace and happiness he found himself suddenly under orders of transfer to a place near Madras. Although these orders were stayed for six months in circumstances which he attributes to Sri Bhagavan's Grace, he had eventually to leave Tiruvannamalai. Before taking leave of Sri Bhagavan he placed before Him a short note praying for some instructions for his future sadhana, but Sri Bhagavan simply put it under his pillow implying thereby that he needed no instructions.

Sri Nataraja Iyer who is now 63 years old, has settled down in Madras. But his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is as great as ever and he never fails to come to the Ashram whenever circumstances permit.

All this is he — what has been and what shall be.
He is the lord of immortality.
Though he has become all this, in reality he is not all this :
For verily is he transcendental.
The whole series of universes — past, present,
and future — express his glory and power :
But he transcends his own glory.

— *Rig Veda.*

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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Date : 24-3-1969.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN.
Signature of the Publisher,

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

A statement showing the income and expenditure of Sri Ramanasramam for the year 1967, certified by Sri J. Srinivasan, F.C.A., Chartered Accountant of Bangalore, is published below for the information of the devotees and well-wishers of the Asramam. The statement was approved on 27-12-1968 by the Board of Trustees appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu and was recorded by the Government in their G.O. Rt. No. 105 Revenue dated 5th February 1969.

(Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President,
Board of Trustees.

Sri Ramanasramam,
22nd February 1969.

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended December 31, 1967

1966 Rs.	EXPENDITURE	Rs. P.	Rs. P.
	To Gosala		
7,040	Expenditure	5,764 58	
— 3,624	*Less*: Income	2,794 12	
			2,970 46
255	Bull & Cart Maintenance		138 58
44,605	Meals	49,332 79	
	Less: Receipts from Resident Members, Bikshas etc.	12,559 83	
— 13,082			36,772 96
827	Postage		874 00
1,667	Salary		1,834 50
2,055	Lighting		2,794 98
1,325	Miscellaneous Expenses		729 57
105	Travelling Expenses		102 15
1,996	Repairs		2,280 40
393	Stationery		673 51
389	Garden Expenses		782 04
..	Miscellaneous cooly		209 19
103	Taxes		47 77
234	Sundaramandiram, Tiruchuzhi		264 38
365	Telephone charges		296 17
430	Auditor's Fee and T.A.		290 00
	Depreciation:		
376	Furniture at 6% on Rs. 5,898.78	353 92	
416	Electrical Installation at 10% on Rs. 3,740.32	374 03	
39	Cycles at 10% on Rs. 348.70	34 87	
			762 82
..	Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year		637 67
45,914	Total		52,461 15

1966 Rs.	INCOME	Rs. P.	Rs. P.
1,961	By Athayam		2,450 45
	Arpanam:		
13,806	Donations: Inland	27,743 46	
6,294	Foreign	8,573 31	
22	Miscellaneous Receipts	342 82	
			36,659 59
	Membership Subscription:		
1,585	Arrears	1,075 00	
4,440	Current	4,310 00	
			5,385 00
850	Aradhana		502 87
..	Mahapooja		182 35
278	Navarathri		38 38
53	Laksharchana		.. ..
	Jayanthi:		
	87th Year Receipts	634 88	
	88th Year Receipts	6,310 52	
		6,945 40	
	Expenses:		
	87th Year Rs. 649.88		
	88th Year Rs. 3,118.33		
5,559		3,768 21	
			3,177 19
2,268	Pooja		2,710 62
..	Mandalabishekam		1,354 70
8,798	Excess of Expenditure over income for the year		.. ..
45,914	Total		52,461 15

Sweet fruit within my hands, let me be mad with ecstasy, drunk with the Bliss of Thy Essence, Oh Arunachala !

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 23.

Publisher :

T. N. Venkataraman,
President, Board of Trustees,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Editor :

Arthur Osborne,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Managing Editor :

V. Ganesan,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

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ॐ THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala ! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala ! "

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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GRACE IN WORDS: The Verses (UPADESA SARAM) in Tamil reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the fascimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

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The Mountain P

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is forth the traditional wisdom religions and all ages, esp as testified to by their sain mystics, and to clarify the available to seekers in the tions of our modern world.

Contributions for publi should be addressed to 'The *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ra ramam, Tiruvannamalai, State'. They should be in and typed with double s Contributions not published returned on request.

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THE MOUNTAIN PAT is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Mah

Grace in Words

திடமிது பூசை செயமுந் தியான
முடல்வாக் குளத்தொழி லந்தீபற
யர்வாகு மொன்றிலொன் றுந்தீபற.
எண்ணுரு யாவு மிறையுரு வாமென
வெண்ணி வழிபட லுந்தீபற
வீசனற் பூசனை யுந்தீபற.
வழுத்தலில் வாக்குச்ச வாய்க்குட் செபத்தில்
விழுப்பமா மானத முந்தீபற
வினம்புந் தியானமி துந்தீபற.

4. *This is certain:*
Worship, praise and meditation,
Being work of body, speech and mind,
Are steps for orderly ascent.

5. *Ether, fire, air, water, earth,*
Sun, moon, and living beings
Worship of these,
Regarded all as forms of His,
Is perfect worship of the Lord.

6. *Better than hymns of praise*
Is repetition of the Name;
Better low-voiced than loud;
But best of all
Is meditation in the mind.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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The Mountain Path

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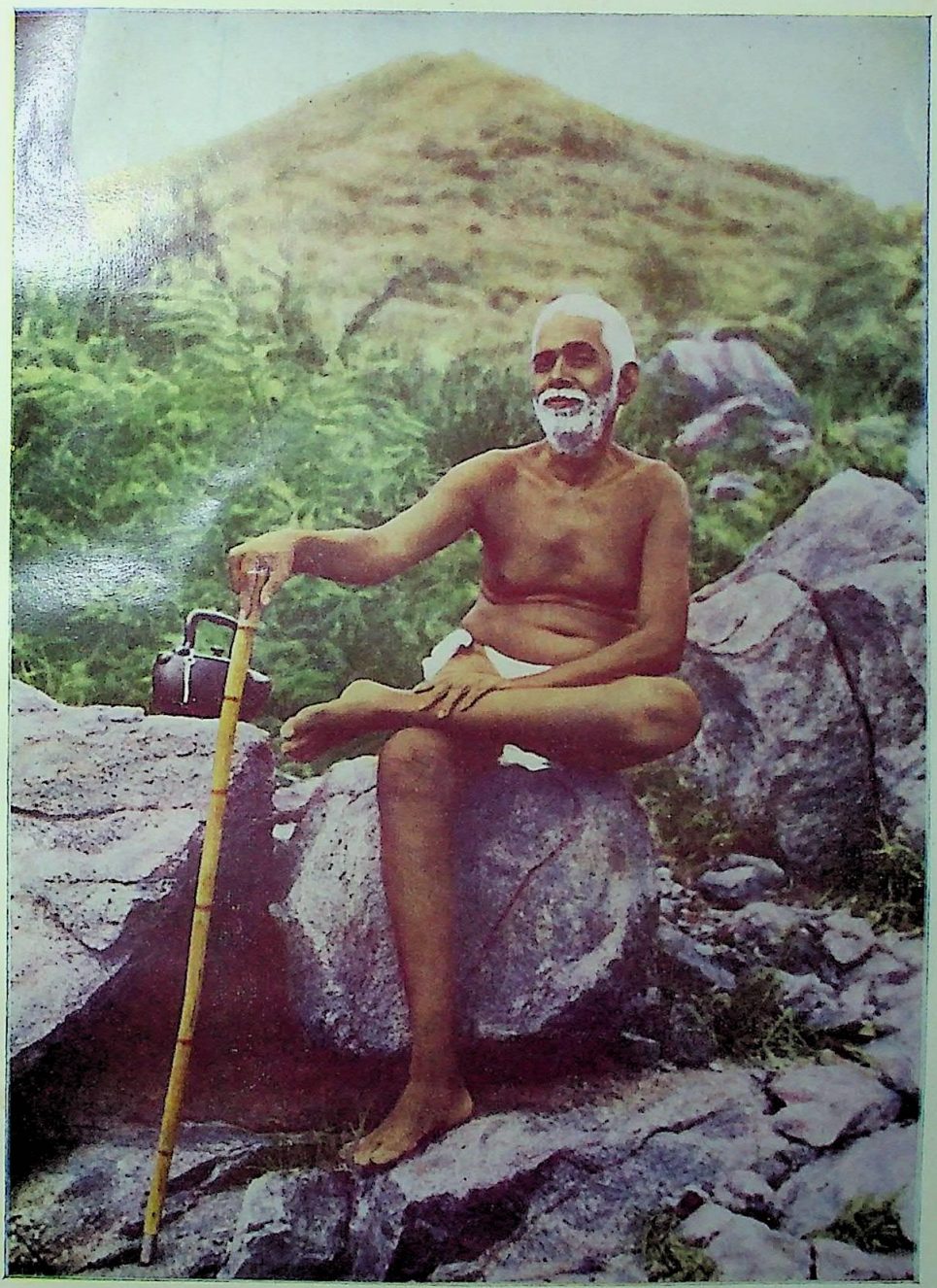
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. VI JULY, 1969 No. 3

WHO IS WHO?

Editorial

WE ask 'Who am I?'; but is there one? First we presume that there is an 'I', then we ask who or what it is. There just *IS* — not I, he, it or anything, but just *IS*. We try to divide up this simple *IS* by pronouns — I, he, you — and by 'this' and 'that', but is it really divisible? I feel being and use the word 'I' for it; but that does not mean that there is any separateness about it. You also feel being and use the same word 'I' for it; of course, because it is the same being.

Outwardly it takes form as a world of things and events. It cognizes this world by means of the faculties of me; of every 'me'. So there are three aspects of it: first, just *IS*; and this is the same whether the other two are or not, this always is. Second, what-is manifested. Third (or perhaps this should be put second) the focal point, that is the cluster of faculties called 'me', through which the manifested is cognized.

It is often remarked that I am an infinitesimal and evanescent fragment in this vast universe. True, but it is no less true that this vast universe is an infinitesimal and evanescent appearance within me. What-is is just the same whether manifested in a universe or not. The pure sense of being that I feel just is; it is the same as what-is. To say that there is no 'I' is the same as saying that there is nothing else.

To say that there is a subjective 'me' and an objective 'me' would open the door to misunderstanding, because all technical terms do that; but it might at the same time point the way to understanding. Technical terms do that too; that is why we find it so hard to renounce them. 'Me' as the focal point between what-is and what-is manifested could be called the subjective me. The me which appears as part of the manifested, on a par with you and Susan and James and John, could be called the objective me. The subjective me (when true to its nature) sees every objective me equally, that is to say loves its neighbour as itself. It is attracted exclusively, totally back towards what-is, that is to say loves God with all its heart and mind and strength.

When true to its nature, but in fact in fallen man it is not true to its nature. Some

considerable practice in meditation may be necessary before it even begins to feel the impersonal I-ness, the unity of being. Even when it does it is likely to continue also to feel the restricted individual I-sense. Every time I feel a thrill of pleasure at being praised or annoyance at being criticised, or take the corner seat in a train, leaving my companion a less comfortable place, or take a second cup of tea when there is not enough to go round, or imagine myself in some role or dread some eventuality, I am proclaiming the individual me in action. And actions speak louder than words. It is no use saying that there is not an ego and behaving as though there is. It is living on the assumption that there is an ego that prevents one from realizing that there is not, that is from attaining Liberation.

Many great Teachers, including the Maharshi, have said that we are not bound, so there can be no Liberation ; and yet paradoxically they have also urged us to seek Liberation. We must be careful of the meaning of the words we use, so as not to get tangled up in them. Liberation from what ? From the ego or our belief in an ego or illusion of an ego. If there is no ego then, of course, there can be no bondage to it and no need for Liberation from it. But so long as I live as though there were an ego and take offence at a slight or want a cake there is an ego for me and I am bound by it or by the service I render to it. The true Self of me is not bound but my bondage to the (real or illusory) ego obscures the true Self of me. Realization of the Self is the same as Liberation from the ego.

What does it matter if I do believe in a separate, individual self, an ego ? Why do spiritual teachers speak of it as a sort of crime ? Because it is. It is ' original sin '. All technical terms mislead — Self, ego, sin, God, mind — all get personified like characters on a stage and need to be re-examined from time to time. I have a mental faculty which is used by what-is to correlate and report the apperceptions of what-is manifested submitted to it by my other faculties. But very early in life this m faculty begins to find some of the re made to it (by warm milk or laug pleasant and others (by a too hot dri sudden loud noise) disturbing and it t itself up into a fictitious person dema the pleasant ones and rejecting, or tryi reject, the unpleasant. For this purp uses and disposes of the other fac This fictitious person it is that is calle ' mind ' or ' ego '. They are the same. it is said (and the Maharshi said it as as other spiritual masters) that the mi the Sage is dead, it does not mean tha mental faculty is in any way impaired he looks at a calendar he can tell the like any one else. It only means tha mental faculty no longer acts as the of the other faculties, and indeed of th planning the future, regretting the hoping, fearing, exulting.

The next question might be : " Su I like the ego-state, why shouldn't I b at peace in it ? " The answer is tha don't like it — nobody does ; and it d leave you at peace. Solomon listed " vant when he ruleth " as one of the calamities. The mental faculty is a serv the mind makes itself the ruler. It is i able ; however favourable one's circum ces it always craves more — more plea more admiration, more success — and eternally insecure, vulnerable to sick bereavement, old age, destitution, and mately unavoidably, to death. Yet alth plagued by this ego-self, although we and insecure and driven to consider death to escape from it, how few have clear sight and steady determination nounce it ! That is the perpetual myst

The question may arise : how do I that I shall be better off, more conte less distressed, if I reject the ego ? who will ? Who am I ? The ego asks question and likes to imagine himself co ing in a valiant war against himself enjoying the rewards. The ego-free sta the natural state ; it is what by nature It is the care-free and deathless state. out the ego, who is there to feel grieve frustrated ?

Are there positive gains also, new powers or experiences ? Who for ? The faculties, set free from the tyrant mind, are free to grow naturally, no longer warped and stunted, no longer shut off from the sunlight. And the mind, the usurper, gloats at the prospect of the powers and experiences that will accrue to him as a reward for his fictitious death, so he asks if there are positive gains. That is one of his strongest lines of defence or counter-attack.

Then suppose one does decide to abjure the seeming-self for the true ? And spiritual aspirants are supposed to have already decided. How is one to set about it ? The mere declaration won't carry one far.

A useful preliminary is to understand what has here been explained about the reality of the Universal Self and the unreality of the apparent individual self. It can never be more than a preliminary, but still it is a useful one. In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna gave it to Arjuna first, in the first half of Chapter Two, before speaking of the discipline he had to follow. But then he told him (v. 39): " What you have been told is the theory ; now listen to the practice that can set you free from bondage to fate."

The next essential would be to live each day as it comes on the assumption of the unreality of the individual self. That would imply complete renunciation of egoism, of boasting and craving and domineering and other encroachments. A technique is usually needed for it. The one that Krishna enjoined in the Gita is cool, efficient, impersonal activity, doing what is right because it is right, irrespective of gain or loss, or of pain or pleasure. That does not mean, of course, that there must be no profit and no pleasure. A merchant naturally sells at a profit because that is his living ; a married man naturally expects pleasure from his marriage ; only profit and pleasure should not override duty and become the dominating motive in life.

But even a discipline of disinterested activity seldom suffices to dissolve the ego-sense. It is an attempt to starve out the ego but needs a more violent campaign to destroy him. This can be surrender or enquiry. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita enjoins surrender and devotion ; Vasishta in the Yoga Vasishta enjoins enquiry ; the Maharshi said : " There are two ways ; ask yourself ' Who am I ? ' or submit ". The mind acts as though it were the ruler of the faculties. It has to abdicate and surrender them and itself to pure Being which is the Self. Or to look inward and find out who it is, what it is, what really *IS*.

Calmness is a steady flow of the mind toward God.
Self-restraint is control of the organs of sense.
Patience is bearing the burden of life cheerfully.
Steadiness is overcoming the palate and the impulse of sex.
The highest charity is refraining from violence.
Austerity is the giving up of desire.
Valour is the conquest of one's own self.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam.*

THE TWO KINDS OF GURU

ARTHUR OSBO

(Republished with the kind permission of the R. M. Bucke Memorial Society Newsletter Review.)

FOR those who aspire to proceed beyond belief to experience in religion it has normally been held necessary to follow a guru or spiritual director. It is not really correct to translate the word 'guru' as 'teacher' because, although he may incidentally expound doctrine, his main function is the transmission of an influence which will fortify the disciple in his inner quest and his guidance of the disciple, verbally or in silence, on that quest. What, then, is the nature of the guru?

Ramana Maharshi said: "The Guru is the formless Self within each one of us. He may appear as a body to guide us, but that is only his disguise." And the author of the article from which this is quoted goes on to say: "It appears from this that to be consciously the Self is to be consciously the Guru." [1]

This statement involves the following doctrinal position. The Supreme Spirit (Paramatma) is the true self (atma) of each person (jiva) and would naturally give right spiritual understanding and guidance, but in most cases the conscious mind is shut off from this by the ego-sense (ahankara), that is the belief in one's existence as a separate individual entity. The impulse arises to return to one's Source but the mind is too estranged to perceive and follow the path directly. Since one mistakes oneself for a separate human being, one can respond to the guidance only through a manifested Guru whom one mistakes for another human being, although he himself is aware of his universal nature. Therefore the Tamil poet-saint Thayumanavar compares the Guru to a deer being used as a decoy to capture another deer. The Maharshi said that the function of the outer Guru is only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart.

The above refers only to the ideal or fect Guru who is in a state of constant wavering consciousness of his univ nature (and it will be observed tha writing it I have spelled the word 'G with a capital letter). But this is a rare thing. Usually a guru or spiritual d tor is a member of a spiritual hiera who has been vested with the authority function of directing others without h himself broken free from the existentia distinct from theoretical) illusion o individual state. With regard to the in this sense I will limit myself to five ob vations.

1. The power that is conveyed is regarded as valid within its limits, ju is the power to perform sacraments th conveyed to a priest by his ordination.

2. Nevertheless too great expecta are not to be placed on such direction, a guide cannot normally lead others fa than he has gone himself.

3. A guru who has not transcended individual state is liable to individual ings. Being revered as a guru may p cularly, for instance, give rise to the of arrogance and hypocrisy. Such faults infectious and liable to be caught by disciples. The guru may be compared pipeline bringing the waters of lif thirsty men; if the pipe has not been cleaned inside, the waters that quench thirst may also carry the germs of typ or cholera.

4. This is an age when traditional are losing their rigidity. All the spiritual masters since Ramakrishna

[1] 'The human status of the Maharshi Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, *The Mountain* April 1967, p. 152.

recognized this, including the Maharshi. It is a time when "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth" and many cases of spontaneous awakening to Truth without the mediation of a guru are reported. These, of course, need further effort and discipline to establish them firmly, but so also does the initiation given by a guru.

5. The Maharshi indicated before shedding the body that he would still be the Guru. Ample evidence has accrued (if any were needed) that this is so.

Perhaps this last point needs to be amplified, as it is not usual for a Guru to continue to function as such after physical death, though there have been cases.

According to the ancient traditional teaching reiterated by the Maharshi, a man does not become one with the Self by attaining Liberation (or Realization) ; he simply realizes his innate, pre-existing oneness. Also he does not merge in the Absolute at death (thus becoming, as some have supposed, incapable of performing an individual function) since he already was one with the Absolute. The Maharshi stated explicitly that there is no difference between the Jivan-Mukta (Liberated while embodied) and the Videha-Mukta (Liberated after death). Once when asked whether a Liberated Man (he always used the Sanskrit term 'Jnani' meaning 'Man of Knowledge' for this) still continued to perform a function after death he answered curtly, "Some may." This assertion is also to be found in the Brahma Sutras, one of the three basic Hindu scriptures. When some of his followers asked him shortly before his own death what they could do for guidance after he left them he made the curt reply : "You attach too much importance to the body." The implication obviously was that only the body was leaving them ; he was not.

In saying that there is ample evidence that this is so, I put in the parenthesis "if any were needed" so as not to seem to be suggesting that the Maharshi's words need any corroboration, they do not. The sort of evidence I have in mind is testimony of those many who have found guidance and support from the Maharshi either in dream or vision or formlessly since his death. Two examples that could be quoted are the verse 'A Beacon Still' by S. P. Mukherji in the January 1964 issue of *The Mountain Path* and the article 'How the Maharshi came to me' by G. N. Daley in that of January 1967.

Finally, reverting to the two types of guru it should be said that the distinction is important because it sometimes happens that the theoretical explanation of the first type, the Sad-Guru or Divine Guru, is used to justify one who is in fact of the second type, the appointed functionary. This can cause theoretical confusion and actual danger.

MEDITATION ON TRUTH

Meditation on the meaning of truth as it is taught in Vedanta leads to the highest illumination. By this means, the misery of worldly life is altogether destroyed.

Faith, devotion, and constant union with God through prayer — these are declared by the sacred scriptures to be the seeker's direct means of liberation. To him who abides by them comes liberation from that bondage of physical consciousness which has been forged by ignorance.

— SHANKARA.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

S. CHAKRAVA

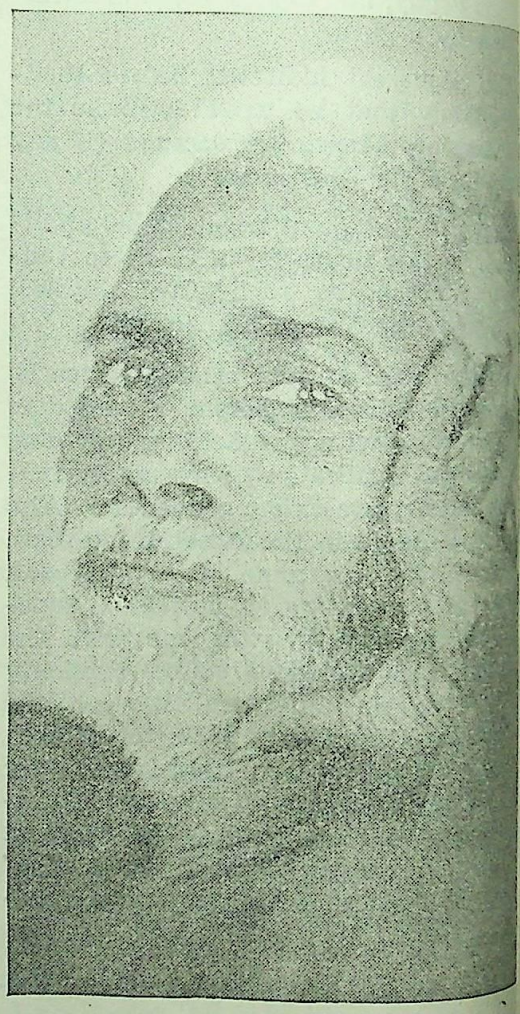
IN my boyhood I was of a contemplative nature. I could not stand any unhappy situation and always tried to find out the cause of it. As I grew older I observed that nobody around me was happy although everyone was hankering after happiness. Why this was so tormented me always.

I enquired from some poor persons and all of them complained that it was only due to their poverty; had they wealth they would certainly have been happy. But when I turned to wealthy persons I was surprised to find that they were also not happy owing to one thing or another and to their eternal craving for more and more.

Then I switched on my attention to those who followed some path of religion and some of them, when speaking frankly, admitted that they also were not happy. They of course enjoyed some sort of pleasure when performing ritual but as soon as they came to face the world they were unhappy because their chosen Gods did not grant their essential needs such as wealth, property, a son, good health, etc.

But by these enquiries and by studying the lives of some great Indian saints I could at least conclude that if happiness was to be found at all it could be found only by spiritual paths, properly followed, not in the material world. Acquisition of wealth and property totally fails for this purpose, having the eternal cravings for more behind it.

I then studied various books for spiritual guidance but the systems which appealed to me to some extent brought with them two great difficulties also. Firstly they dictated that to make any headway spiritually there must be a Siddha Guru (Realized Guide) and secondly the aspirant must thoroughly purify himself of all the lower tendencies before proceeding. "A leaky boat can never sail safe to harbour", was the stern warning.



The hindrances were overwhelming. H could I pick out a perfect and realized g from among the dozens (both male female) visiting our city every month, s performing miracles, some curing disea some showing feats of thought-readin every one of them with the ambition increasing the number of his disciples every one claiming his path to be the be Secondly, how could I be completely attached and a strict celibate, being a fam man in this modern age, when all my v vious attempts had failed? Really th were herculean tasks, at least for me.

At this stage a doctor friend of mine one day enquired whether I had heard the name of Maharshi Ramana. I was so fed up with the search for Gurus by this time that I at once fired a volley of questions at him — "What does this Maharshi of yours teach? What is his mantra? How many disciples does he want to initiate daily?" But I found that the doctor himself did not know much about the Maharshi. After that, in spite of my strongly developed anti-guru feelings, the name of Maharshi Ramana was somehow ringing in my mind for several days and, as if drawn by some invisible force, one day I went to Sri H. C. Khanna of Kanpur, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, who received me cordially and informed me that Maharshi Ramana always refused to initiate any disciple, and dictated no mantra. He simply asked an aspirant to enquire who he is. As these words entered my ears I was startled. A guru who did not want to initiate and increase the muster of his disciples — how strange! And WHO AM I? — what a marvellous hint! I at once caught the clue and soon discovered that the real "I" is not subject to sufferings, cravings for more and more, afflictions or frustrations, and if a man can reach that point he is naturally happy — what more can he want? Why then run here and there after gurus and mantras, why fantastic theories, and rituals? Why not take a headlong dive to reach the source of "I" here and now?

I then read most of Sri Ramanasramam publications and other writings on the philosophy of the great Maharshi and all my doubts and difficulties vanished like autumn clouds. Scrutinizing all his instructions with a very critical mind I was thoroughly convinced that the teachings of the Great Maharshi Sri Ramana are the most logical, scientific and suitable to the modern structure of society. An ascetic of the highest order, completely detached, with no paraphernalia, no matted hair, no posing, no touring, no lecturing, yet thousands of seekers flocking round him from all corners of the globe to Tiruvannamalai. When such a Maha Yogi says that a guru need not be in human form and initiation is not indispensable, my first hurdle was crossed.

As regards my second stumbling block of strict celibacy, the Maharshi's verdict is that celibacy is an aid on the path but not the goal and my reaction to this was enthusiastic. When the great Maharshi does not attach much weight to it why should I? The result of my aloof attitude was astounding. What I thought to be an unsurmountable difficulty disappeared altogether within a very short space of time and without great effort on my part.

It was surely my destiny that I did not know anything about Sri Ramana Maharshi when he was in human form, but nevertheless I feel his grace at every step. I am not in affluent circumstances but whatever I really need is never wanting. Even the smallest necessities are so promptly and unexpectedly furnished that there remains hardly anything to be asked for. His grace is unfathomable. But my personal view is that efforts invoke grace and expedite its action. Want of time, suitable circumstances, etc. are lame excuses. A man may start at any age with even faltering faith and fractional time and the opportunities will be automatically forthcoming. A man may arrive at the state of supreme peace and bliss next moment, for who knows that is one's preparation from the previous births? There is no social restriction on this bright, sunlit and direct path.

I do not at all claim to hold even the lowest position in the field of sadhana, but after all, the exact spot under which there is a gold mine has been located; the implements are there; it is now up to me to labour silently to dig it out and bring it to the surface!

SYMBOLISM IN VEDIC POETRY AND MYTHOLOGY

Prof. A. C. B

Two Modes of Speech

THIS (truth) has been sung by the Rishis in various ways and in different metres, and also (stated) definitely and logically through words of aphorisms on the nature of Brahman.

— *Bhagavad Gita*, xiii-4.

A clear distinction has been made here between two modes of speech — poetry of the Vedic Rishis who have sung in various ways and in different metres, and the prose of later sages who have made definite logical statements in their aphorisms on Brahman (the Supreme Being).

While in prose the ideas about the Supreme Being were set down in well defined terms, linked up by logical process of thinking, in poetry the inner visions of the sages found expression in language in which sound-images and sense-images merged in each other to make a highly significant form.

From Silence to Eloquence

A Vedic Rishi, referring to a deep spiritual experience, says that he does not know 'what to speak' or even 'what to think' (*Rig Veda*, 6. 9. 6). The Supreme Being has been described in the Veda as 'far beyond expression' (*Atharva Veda*, 10. 7. 28). An Upanishad says: "From That words turn away baffled" (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2. 4.).

"For the finite, the eloquent man", says the Veda, "and for the infinite (ananta), the dumb" (*Yajur Veda*, 30. 19). Dumbness or silence is, indeed, the natural reaction to an experience of the Infinite. It is said that the sage called 'Muni' had the name because he was 'mauni', the silent man, as a result of his experience of the Infinite which was inexpressible in the common language of man. If there was any communication, it was through silence i This silence is recognized in the Vedic t tion as a profoundly spiritual attitude. said in the Bhagavad Gita that the Div 'is the silence that wraps the m secrets.' (x. 38)

But what was ineffable for language accepted logical definitions of words expressed by the Rishi. He, as his n implies, was 'one who saw'. He is sai have 'seen the mantra', the complete p form comprising sound and sense. The V says of the sages that they 'see with t spirit (*hrid*) and their mind (*man* (RV. 10. 177. 1). They also want to see their eyes: "Give sight to our eyes . . that they can see." And they pray: "y we see the world together (*sam*) and s separately (*vi pasyama*)" i.e. have a p cular as well as a comprehensive v (R.V. 10. 158. 4). This is the poetic v in the embodiment of which what is s with the eye becomes a symbol for wh seen with the spirit — the unman Absolute manifested in creation as Deva Being of Light. So the silence imposed an experience of the Infinite is replaced eloquence when the finite is made to sym lise the Infinite.

While following this method of symb sation, the Rishi speaks of the D (Pushan) as Poet, and describes his p vision by saying: "He who sees all s rately (*vi*) and sees all creation toge (*sam*) — may he, Pushan, be our Pro tor" (RV. 3. 62. 9). Elsewhere the s speaks of the Deva (Varuna) as Poet in following terms:

> He . . . knows the secret, mysterious n of the morning beams, He, a Poet, cher by his poetic powers (*kavya*), mani forms of beauty (*rupa*) like the sky. (*RV.* 8. 41.

The Rishi says of the Veda that "it was the first and foremost speech (*Vak*) that the sages uttered, giving names (to the nameless) — speech that was their best and was stainless, and that revealed with love (*preman*) the (Divine) Secret within them" (RV. 10. 71. 1).

The Veda has called the formless, nameless, unmanifest Absolute by cryptic terms like 'That' (*Tat*), That Reality (*Tat Sat*), the Eternal (*Aksharam*) and other words in the neuter gender and singular number, and by the indeclinable Om. The sages found names for the Absolute manifested in creation in terms of the splendour of creation. These are symbolic names representing aspects of the splendour as Devas and Devis. Here not only is the neuter gender changed into the masculine and the feminine, but, in addition to the singular number, dual and plural numbers also are used. But it is frequently affirmed in various ways, including straight declarations, that the Absolute is manifested as Devas (RV. 3. 55. 1) and that "The sages have called the One Being by many names" (RV. 1. 164. 46). As a corollary to this with one Deva are identified another Deva, or other Devas and Devis (e.g. with Agni, Rudra individually, RV. 3. 2. 5.), and Rudra and other Devas collectively are identified (RV. 2. 1). Similarly, Deva is spoken of as the Supreme Being, and as the Creator. Again, a Deva is addressed not only as Father, but as Father, Brother, Friend, etc., at the same time. A Deva has also been addressed as both 'Father and Mother'. (e.g. in RV. 8. 98. 11, SV. AV.), and a Devi is said to be 'Mother, Father and Son' (RV. 1. 89. 10, Vy. VS. AV.), and the same Deva has been called King, Sage, Poet, etc. So the names of Devas are symbolic descriptions of the One who, as Pure Being, is indescribable.

Symbolism

A symbol has been defined as 'a representation that does not aim at being a reproduction'.[1] According to this definition, the blue colour in a map represents water, without water being actually displayed. Similarly the ideas of an object which cannot be logically defined, much less reproduced, is represented by something having no intrinsic relation with it, which is made to serve as a symbol for it for the purpose of expression. In poetry and art the symbol is a means of expressing the inexpressible.

Even secular poets who have not been considered to be mystics or symbolists are found to use the symbolic method, sometimes unconsciously, to express what they find inexpressible. Take, for instance, the following stanza :

Break, break, break
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Here Tennyson, afflicted by grief at the death of his friend, says in the last two lines that he cannot utter his sad thoughts. But he has already uttered them in the first two lines, not as thoughts, but as a vision of the Sea (which he personifies). In these lines the words 'cold' and 'grey' do not just indicate the temperature and colour of the stones, but serve to build a bleak atmosphere reflecting the poet's mood, and the thrice repeated and halting 'break' seems, quite illogically, to suggest a heart-break.

Let us turn to the Veda and consider a stanza that embodies a poetic vision :

The beautiful-winged Bird (Suparna)
which is One
has entered the sea (of space).
He looks around this whole universe.
Him with a simple hear I have seen
from near:
His Mother kisses him and he kisses
his Mother
(RV. 10. 114. 4).

The next stanza continues : "Suparna who is One wise poets with their words figure in many ways." Here what has been said about the One Absolute ('The One Reality sages speak of in many ways') is repeated in the case of Suparna making of Suparna a symbolic name for the former (One Suparna

[1] F. N. Comte Gobbet d'Alvella, quoted by A. Symons in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature.*

in the masculine singular replacing the *Ekam Sat* in the neuter singular) ; that is to say, the Manifest Absolute as Deva replaces the Unmanifest Absolute as Pure Being. Here the relation between the Deity and Earth is that of Child and Mother. (In literature it has been called *vatsalya rasa*, love of the mother for the child, as a form of devotion to God). In the Bhagavata Purana this idea is more humanised in the love of Yasoda for Child Krishna.

The same attitude of affection towards Suparna is found in another hymn, containing the following stanza which is addressed to Deva Soma :

> The many voices of the loving ones
> sought the Bird
> (Suparna) who had flown to the heavens.
> The hymns kiss the Child, so worthy
> of praise,
> the golden-hued Bird that sits on
> the earth.
> (RV. 9. 85. 11).

Hiranya (gold) in the Veda has been used to symbolise Divine splendour, (some have thought of the golden colour of the rising sun as the symbol. Here, however, the Bird is said to be sitting on the earth).

As a result of the sages' figuring the One in many ways to represent the splendour of the Manifest Divine, there is a galaxy of Devas and Devis in the Veda, bearing names symbolizing aspects of that splendour.

How Symbolic Names are Formed

Sometimes these symbolical names are personified ideas, as in Aditi, the Devi (*aditi*, infinity, personified). The Infinite or Absolute has been spoken of in the Veda in eloquent terms that are not symbolic but that supercede logic. After saying —

> There was neither existence nor
> non-existence then....
> There was no death then nor deathlessness....,

the sage says :

> The ONE (Ekam) breathed airless by
> self-impulse,
> Other than That was nothing whatsoever.
> (RV. 10. 129. 1-2).

The One in the latter passage is replaced by the vision of Devi Aditi in the following :

> Aditi is the sky, Aditi the firmament,
> Aditi the Mother, the Father, the
> Aditi is all the Devas, the five-classed
> Aditi is all that is born and all
> that will be
> (RV. 1. 89. 90. YV. Vs

Here, instead of contemplating the Absolute without form and quality, sage-poet expresses the idea in relation the phenomenal world. (In later re literature we are told of "the Devi exists in all beings as Mother" (*Markandeya Chandi*). Other names of Deva Devis as personified ideas include the Vak (the sacred Speech), Sraddha (F and Ila (Prayer) and the Devas (Love), Mrityu (Death), Bhaga (L and Manyu (Wrath against aggression)

There are Devas having names of sonified objects like Surya (the sun), (wind, air), Parjanya (rain) and peri the day like Ushas (dawn), Ratri (n etc. Certain symbolic names are f through metonymy. For instance, Agni on which ritualistic offerings are ma the name of a Deva (like 'crown' fo king, 'chair' for the chairman), and S juice of the plant of the same name, c as libation in the ritual, becomes a nam a Deva. Whatever the origin of the every Deva or Devi is spoken of in g terms as the Manifest absolute with butes expressed in functions. For exa Vak says about herself :

> It is I who like the wind breathe forth
> and eat all existing things in mo
> Beyond the heavens and beyond the
> earth
> and all this I have become in my
> sple
> (RV. 10.

Agni, for whom the symbol is fi addressed as follows :

> A fountain in the desert art thou, O Ag
> to the worshipful man, O ancient
> (eternal
> (RV. 10.
>
> Agni! thou hast made the sun,
> the ageless
> mount the sky, conferring light on
> (RV. 10. 156.

To Soma symbolised by the juice of the plant of the name, the sage says :

Thou art vast (lit. the sea), O Sage (*kavi*), all-knowing.
Under thy law are the five regions of the world.
Thou transcendest heaven and earth.
O Purifying One ! thine are the lights and thine the sun.
(RV. 9. 86. 29).

And of Soma it is said : " He clothes all who are naked ; doctors all who are sick. (Through his help) the blind man sees, the cripple goes about ". (RV. 8. 79. 2)

There are descriptive terms used as names of Devas like Indra (subduer, ruler), Mitra (friend), Pushan (nourisher), Varuna (the all-pervading), Vishnu (all-pervader), Savitr (impeller — also implying the sun).

Among other names more specifically descriptive are : Visvakarman (architect, of the universe), Tvashtr (fashioner), Prajapati (Lord of Creation), Brahmanaspati, Brihaspati (Lord of sacred knowledge) etc. Sarasvati (literally, Mother of the lake — of knowledge, and secondarily a river of that name, symbolising motherly beneficence) has been described as ' Protectress of the intellect.'

There are dual Devas like Dyavaprithivi, Heaven and Earth, Asvins, ' double Charioteers ' of the pre-dawn twilight, regarded as a symbol of union, and multiple Devas like Maruts (described as ' wonderful-looking like kings . . . like sinless gallants, leaders of the people . . . like children having handsome mothers' — RV. 10. 78), and Apah (waters spoken of as ' the most motherly physicians ' and ' Mothers of all that stands and all that moves ' — RV. 6. 50. 7). Similarly, two or more Devas or Devis are addressed together. The following symbolic description of two Devis (Day and Night) is interesting :

Different each from the other you Two have made twin beauties of yourselves.
One of them is bright, the other dark.
Yet these two, the black and the crimson, are sisters.
Great and single is the Godhood of Devas.
(RV. 3. 55. 11)

Certain personifications are on a wider scale, particularly in Hiranyagarbha, Source of Splendour (*hiranya*, literally gold, is in a secondary sense, splendour—AV. 10. 7. 28), and in Purusha, Universal Man or collective humanity of all times and places, personified as Deva. The vastness of Purusha is signified by describing him as a being of innumerable (lit. a thousand) heads, eyes, and feet, pervading the earth on all sides and as ' what has been and what will be.' He is called ' the Lord of immortality, transcending by mortal nurture ' (symbolising man rising beyond his mortality to immortality). The Absolute (with which Purusha is identified) is said to be only partially manifested. Purusha manifests himself in splendour (*viraj*) which is also said to manifest Purusha. The transformation of the transcendental into the phenomenal is symbolically described as a grand cosmic *yajna* (fire ritual) in which Purusha offers himself as a sacrifice. Time, a category that produces a limitation to the Absolute, is particularised in that ritual as the three seasons — spring, summer and autumn, which become the molten butter, fuel and oblation — ingredients of the sacred rite. The phenomenal world comes into being as a result of the *yajna*.

The worship of Purusha is the worship of the Absolute Being who has, as it were, (partly) sacrificed himself in order to be manifested in the phenomenal world. But a Rishi of the Yajurveda, reproducing the Rigvedic hymn on Purusha (RV. 10. 90), penetrates the veil of phenomena and realises the Absolute in Purusha and tells of this in a stanza of his own :

I have known the great Purusha who is refulgent as the sun beyond darkness.
By knowing him alone one transcends death.
There is no other way to go.
(YV. Vs. 31. 18).

This implies looking beyond the finite manifestation of the Absolute to the Absolute as pure Being. The Veda declares " Only the lowest aspects of the Devas are seen, who exist on Supreme (*para*) and mystical (*guhya*) planes '. (RV. 3 54 5).

In keeping with the Vedic view of Devas a Rishi addresses them saying: "All your names, Devas! are venerable, laudable and adorable" (RV. 10. 63. 2). Even when contemplated separately, they are found to be united through *Samjnana*, unity and harmony resulting from the knowledge of their "Single Godhood." (This Vedic view has been shared by religious teachers of later ages in India and has marked the attitude of Indians towards God in other religions too).

Embodiment of Vedic Values

The Devas and Devis of the Vedas embody the highest Vedic values, spoken of as Rita and Satya, which are said to have been the first to be manifested in creation (through Tapas, the blazing spiritual fire). Rita is Eternal Order transforming on the cosmic plane, chaos into cosmos which is marked by order, harmony and beauty and on the social plane all disorderliness and dissoluteness into order, harmony and goodness. On one side it establishes the law of nature and on the other the moral law, both signified by the Vedic term *dharman*, and by the later Vedic and post-Vedic word dharma (literally, 'form' aesthetic and moral). Satya is Truth, as integrity and as reality.

To the sceptic who says, "There is no Indra, who has ever seen him? whom shall we praise?" the sage gives Indra's reply: "Here I am, singer! See me here (*pasya ma iha*). In my splendour I am above all that exists. The commandments of Rita (Eternal Law) exalt me . . . ' (RV. 8. 100. 3-4). It has been said elsewhere about Indra: "For every form (*rupa*) he has been the Model. That form of his is to be seen everywhere." (RV. 6. 47. 18). In a symbolic way making an incipient myth, a Rishi says: "Indra let young Virgins skilled in Rita (Law of Nature) flow streaming forward, bubbling as rills." (RV. 4. 19. 7). Indra has also been called 'the Son of Truth' (RV. 8. 69. 4) and Savitr is said 'to have Truth as the law of being' (AV. 2. 24. 1). Sometimes Devas are identified with Rita and Satya. It is said of Deva Surya that "he is the Swan[2] seated in the midst of light . . . the Priest seated by the alt Guest seated in the house. Dwelling i . . . dwelling in Rita, dwelling i infinite sky and . . . born of Rita is Rita" (RV. 4. 40. 5 YV. Vs.) Indra to be 'Truth and not untruth' (RV. 12). Devas Asvins are described as " and "facing the Truth" (RV. 8. 57.

An Upanishad identifies Rita and with That (*Tat*, the Absolute Reality, *narayana* I. 6). In the Atharva Ved and Satya along with Tapas, Sr (reverence, faith) and Vrata (self-d tion) are said to be lodged within Skambha (the name meaning, 'Supp the universe, 10. 7. 1). So the Veda m categorical statement: "The Deva always pure" (SV. 442).

Being perfect in terms of Rita and and other values, the Devas are Mode men who, though manifested with and so entitled to claim kinship with are deficient in two respects — their ph mortality and their imperfect adheren the highest values of life, including Ri Satya. So a sage says: "I have risen life, risen with good life (*su ayus*) f ing the example of the Immortals. (R 4. 28). Samjnana, the loving union th knowledge (of their common Div existing among the Devas has been the Veda as an example before (RV. 10. 191. AV. 330).

There is a very significant Vedic in which the Rishi's vision of the Ab (*Tat Sat*, in the neuter singular) and Deva (in the masculine singular embodied in the same stanza:

Vena (the loving sage) sees That (*Tat Sat*) hidden in mystery, in whi find one single home. In that all this from that all issues forth. He (for *Tat* omnipresent One (Vibhuh, in the mas gender) is the warp and woof in cr things." (YV. Vs. 32. 8).

Divinity Manifested in Man

As the passage quoted above shows Veda speaks of the Absolute Being no

[2] The word (Hamsa) has been used f Ultimate Reality in later times.

as transcendent but also as immanent. In the latter sense the word Atman (Soul, in the masculine gender) and, at times, Yaksham (Spirit, in the neuter gender), have been used in the Veda. They have been used both in the universal sense (as *paramatman*, Oversoul) and in the individual sense (as *jivatman*). In the Rigveda Surya (the sun) symbolising the transcendent Reality, has been identified with Atman: "Surya, pervading the heavens, the earth and the mid-region, is the soul of all that moves or stands still (RV. 1. 115. 1). The Veda also speaks of "the peerless Spirit (*Yaksham*) that lies in all created things" (YV. Vs. 34. 2). Sometimes the word Manas, usually meaning 'mind', has been used in the sense of Spirit, as in: "May we not fight against the Divine Spirit (*daivyam manah*) within us (AV. 7. 52).

The deepest spiritual awareness is found to be achieved through Rajayoga, the realization by man of the Divinity within him. The Rigveda speaks of "two birds (*suparnas*) friends bound together (by love), that have embraced the same tree of which one eats the sweet fruit, the other not eating, looks around" (RV. 1. 164. 20). This has been understood as an allegory of Jivatman and Paramatman abiding within the body of man. The Atharva Veda speaks of the body of man as 'a lotus flower, covered by three bands (*gunas*), in which abides the spirit (*yaksham*) with Atman, which is known to those who know Brahman" (AV. 10. 8. 43). Here 'Yaksham' is Jivatman and 'Atman' Paramatman. The lotus has come down as a symbol of Divine presence, in Indian architecture, sculpture and painting (at home and abroad) as well as in poetry. It is said that in the final, superconscious stage of realization, Jivatman, with the illusions of mortal life cast off, realizes its identity with Paramatman. Elsewhere the Veda speaks of the sage who discovers his identity with 'Purusha that is in the sun, and everywhere', and asserts, 'I am That' (*So'ham* — YV. Vs. 40. 17).

Why Vibhutiyoga (Path of Splendour)?

The question may be asked: why should not one strive for a direct realization of the Pure Being through Rajayoga? Why seek That in the splendour of the universe (through Vibhutiyoga)? An answer to this may be given in the words of the poet W. B. Yeats who, acquainted with Indian mode of thinking, asks and answers the question:

> Soul: Seek out reality, leave things that seem.
> Heart: What, be a singer and lack a theme?[3]

It is the poet's vocation to give embodiment to visions of beauty and splendour in the phenomenal world. Vedic poetry which contemplates 'the glory (*bhargas*) of the Deva' (RV. 3. 62. SV. YV. Vs) has been found to have expressed it in 'language that is glorious' (*bhargasvati vak*, AV. 6. 69. 2). In thus reflecting Divine glory, Vedic poetry may be said to have come near the realization of Rajayoga. In fact, the words (*vak*) of the Veda have come to be regarded as 'sabda-brahman', sound that symbolises the Divine.

In addition to the form there is a particular significance of the content of Vedic poetry. If, as a Sanskrit rhetorician says, poetry is 'words with *rasa* (the animating and exhilarating principle) in them, then Vedic poetry has a special appeal of its own. It is said that 'the Divinity is *rasa* itself' and by obtaining that *rasa* one is filled with supreme joy' (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2. 7). Vedic poetry drawing upon that Divine *rasa*, may be said to share with direct spiritual realization the ecstasy of supreme bliss.

The Spiritual Tradition in India

Two Vedic traditions, one the oral transmission of the Vedic texts, and the other the continuity of spiritual realization through an unbroken line of sages and saints, age after age down to our own times, have contributed to the preservation and enrichment of Indian spiritual values. The second tradition has often involved remarkable poetic expression in the different regional languages of the country as well as in Sanskrit. In the poetry of the sage of Arunachala, who has been significantly described as Maharshi, there is much that reminds one of the mode

[3] *The Winding Stair.*

of expression of the Vedic Rishis, as the following lines taken out from the English translation [4] of his poems in Tamil will show :

Reveal Thyself ! Thou only art Reality,
O Arunachala ! [5]

(In this and other lines a hill symbolises the Deity)

Transcendental Self, O Arunachala !
Fearless I ask Thee, Fearlessness Itself.
Grant me the essence of the Vedas, which shine in the Vedanta.
One without a second, O Arunachala !
Annamalai (Arunachala) !..... Do not fail me, Lord, who art Consciousness Itself, neither male nor female.
Abide Thou in my heart.[6]

As the string in (a necklet of) gems, it is Thou in Thy unity who penetratest all the diversity of beings and religions....O benign and dazzling Aruna Hill ! is there anything apart from Thee ? [7]

Difficulty with Symbols

There are people, wholly committed to logic, who fail to understand symbolic language. What is more surprising, they proceed to take the poetry of the Veda as material for logical inference about history and social events even though the words have no accepted logical definition (e.g. Varuna is found to be an ethical Deva because his emissaries detect and punish evil men, Indra to be non-ethical because he, a C pion of Rita, Moral Law fights and de Vritra, the sworn enemy of Rita, who i alive again).

There are people of whom the Vedic say that they are temperamentally inc of understanding Vak, the sacred S (and need systematic training), others do so instantly :

There is the man who sees but has no seen
there is the man who hears but has hear
but to another she reveals her lovely fo
(RV. 10.

All genuine poetry makes an appe the poet in us, and in Vedic poetry the speaks to those who can comprehend Vedic sage stresses this idea when he

All these musical and secret words,
these speeches of a seer for a see
I, a poet, have uttered in hymns and
(RV. 4.

But the Rishi's hymns may arouse w in those in whom it lies dormant.

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4 By Arthur Osborne.
5 *The Marital Garland of Letters.*
6 *The Necklet of Nine Gems.*
7 *The Arunachala Ashtakam.*
(All these books are by Bhagavan Sri R Maharshi).

"All that is required to realise the Self is to BE STILL. What can be easier than that ? Hence *Atma-vidya* (Self-knowledge) is the easiest to attain."

— Sri Ramana.

* * * *

Remove our evil dream of duality.
Wipe out all sins that obstruct the path to right knowledge.
Grant us that knowledge of the Truth which is beyond all doubts and misconceptions.

— *Yajur Veda.*

METHODS AND EXPERIENCES

By
CHANDRA SWAMI[1]

HAVING briefly discussed the importance of moral and mental requisites for a complete spiritual unfoldment we now come to the main subject — a subject momentously significant — of spiritual contemplation, the purpose of which is to take us beyond the mind to the direct supramental vision of the Divine. The process of perfected contemplation leads to relaxation in the Divine Spirit without stress or strain or to an absorption in the seer who shines in its pure light in the deep silence, where the mental activities of thinking and feeling are entirely abolished.

This process implies the contraction, through spiritual concentration, of the polar triangle of experience, that is the knower, knowing and what is known, into the 'Point' which further dissolves in the boundless sea of the ether of consciousness. This state is the highest possible spiritual experience to which proper contemplation leads. What happens next ? A greater and wider consciousness is worked out by the Divine of its own accord. Theory is not practice and words are not the things for which they stand. Therefore, whatever be the spiritual width and felicity of this state we leave it to the reader to experience for himself or herself in his or her soul through proper practice.

What does spiritual concentration mean and what is its practical method or technique ? By spiritual concentration is meant the gathering together of all the dispersed capacities of the being and centralising them on the Divine for the sole purpose of realizing the Divine. It is nothing short of this.

All the methods of spiritual concentration may be classified into two groups — the positive and negative. Each of these two methods involves the inner movements, one passive and the other active, to be simultaneously followed. In the positive method these two movements are 'fixing' and 'watching'; in the negative method they are 'stopping' or 'rejecting' and 'watching'. In other words, in both methods the consciousness has to be divided, as it were, into two parts, passive and active; the active part doing something and the passive part doing nothing but vigilantly observing the work being performed by the active part. We shall make these two methods more clear.

The Negative Method

The negative method of spiritual concentration is quite simple to undertand. All kinds of emotions, moods and ideations that arise from within, or impacts of thoughts and suggestions which come from without, are to be rejected and discarded as soon as they arise or come. And simultaneously it is to be keenly observed that this 'stopping' or 'rejecting' is going on uninterruptedly and that the active part has not become engaged in thinking, willing or feeling something else than mere 'rejecting'. Slowly and gradually, when this practice progresses, the 'attacks' from within or without begin to get mild and ultimately are reduced to nil. In the final step even the notion of discarding and rejecting is dismissed and cast off. Thus a point of unenforced concentration is reached where all the activities of the mind are annihilated, all its modifications stopped and only awareness remains in its pristine purity. The seer is then said to be established in the Self, there being no inner or outer object left before it, not even the blankness of mind. This is a state of peace and nothing but peace; there is no feeling of pain or pleasure and tranquillity reigns supreme. The Self or Atman is experienced in this state in its pure nature, the eternal existing by its own right, not

[1] From his book *The Practical Approach to Divinity*.

depending for awareness on anything, free from all pairs of opposites because they are no longer there, inactive because all activity which made the Purusha to be identified with it has ceased. This experience, it may be said here in passing, is not the only experience, not even the highest, in the realm of spiritual experiences.

The Positive Method

In the case of the positive method of concentration in which 'fixing' is to be practised it may be asked, "On what object should the mind be fixed? How can we fix our mind on the Divine whom we have not seen or whom we do not know?"

Yes, some divine symbols or images are necessary in this method in order to give a support to the mind. For concentration every one has to take some image or other. The practice of 'fixing' is not possible without it. These symbols or images can be placed under three categories of form, name and idea (including feelings).

It is needless to say that this positive method of 'fixing' is easier than the negative method of 'rejecting'. This can be understood from the analogy of the spider. The spider which comes down by means of a thread which it has projected out of itself goes up to its place through the same thread and then absorbs the thread within itself. Similarly the individual who is, through idea, name and form, externalised from his state of essential peace and poise, can most easily return to his essential state with the help of these very things. Moreover the mind of men in all its day-to-day affairs is always occupied with the world of name, form and ideas and it is not possible or practicable to get rid of these things all at once. The proper way is to practise fixing the mind on one form, or name or idea which in the final plunge of contemplation drops of itself, revealing that of which it is the symbol.

Divine Form as the Support:

In this method of concentration a form or object with a form such as the sun or moon or fire or sky or the divine form of some personal deity or a saint or a prophet incarnation of God is chosen as a s for the mind for concentration. For o is of a devotional temperament it is to achieve concentration on the form or her Ishta (deity for whom one has cial attachment). This is also most f in its results as the Ishta itself help looks after the devotees' work. Othe do not have sufficient faith and de may choose the sun or moon or any object, preferably a luminous one, as port for the mind. Thus the chosen is seen within in imagination and th is made to hold on steadily to that for longer and longer periods. The place or centre within the body whe image has to be imagined and held point between the eyebrows — the ce command called the 'ajna chakra' in terminology.

Divine Name as the Support:

Now we come to the word or nam support for concentration. Some na God or mantra or phrase is selected a ing to one's faith and conviction. mentally or vocally repeated gentl calmly and the consciousness is cent on the hearing of this name or mantra mantra is a phrase or a formula meaning which affirms the existence and embodies a certain idea or feel relation to God such as surrender to H feeling His presence or devotion with tain prayer in adoration of Him. This tice is called 'japa'. Science may not it today, logic may also fail to do experience has shown that such into and repetition of the Lord's name has vellous effect in tuning the mind wi Self — the Spirit which is all and i all.

That there is a tremendous power name of the Lord and that the Lord's descends through His name on one faithfully and whole-heartedly repeats a fact confirmed and reconfirmed b holy saints of all religious denomin without distinction.

The proper place for concentrati God's name is the 'Heart centre' which

responds to the cardiac centre of physiology, the 'anahata chakra' in Yogic parlance. Let it here be pointed out that the shorter the mantra or the word the better it is; because it becomes easier to concentrate on it. This practice of japa can lead — when performed to the exclusion of all the other methods of concentration — to the highest spiritual experience. There have been many saints who devoted themselves to this method and realized the Lord.

An Idea as the Support:

The third kind of support or 'avalambana' that can be given to the mind for concentration is a certain single idea in relation to God such as the idea of God as the only power or existence, or of the distinctness of the pure Self from the body or the idea of dependence on God or the idea of God as the supreme peace in which one feels oneself to be rapt in ecstasy.

Any such single idea which accords most with one's religious or spiritual faith and conviction is taken and used for fixation. This chosen idea is upheld, to the exclusion of all the rest in the mind and entertained unbrokenly. If this idea is devotional the proper place for concentration is the 'anahata chakra', but if it is pre-dominantly intellectual or metaphysical the proper place is the 'ajna chakra'.

A Third Method

Apart from the above mentioned positive and negative methods there is a third method also, one in which there is neither fixing nor rejecting to be practised and in which one has to stand aside from thoughts, taking them to be a part of nature and not of Self, and simply watch them like a witness. The thoughts thus arise and subside unheeded and unidentified with him by the Purusha who observes, as it were, from above. For some time the mind thinks mechanically, but having lost its conscious centre of support ultimately falls silent and passive. Thus a state of alert passivity is reached. It is in this state of deep silence that the true nature of the Purusha is revealed, or the Lord manifests himself.

All these three methods are the most efficient ones to still the mind and lead to the supramental and spiritual vision. Of course they are difficult, for an extravert particularly, and need long and sincere striving for success.

Meditation

There is a difference between contemplation and meditation. In the former the mind is to be fixed on a single object or idea; in the latter the mind is to be concentrated on a correlated train of ideas thinking out a single subject. The former means the staying of the mind on one particular object or idea, the latter implies the flowing of the mind on a set of ideas which are interwoven while working out a single subject. Meditation denotes sequential thinking. For example, some elevating scene from the life of an avatar or a great saint or the transcience of the world may be put as the matter or subject before the mind for meditation. It is clear that this process of meditation is easier than contemplation. As a matter of fact meditation is the first stage of concentration leading to a second stage called contemplation.

Would the mere intellectual knowledge of the methods of swimming enable you to swim? Certainly not. In order to learn the art of swimming you must get into the water and use head, hands and feet. The instructions about, and the knowledge of, the method can help you and can make it easier for you to swim, but you must exercise and practise. Similar is the case with concentration in which you must sit and exert your heart and brain to bring a consummate mastery over your tumultous mind.

A Few Dangers

It will not be out of place to mention here certain dangers which the over-eager aspirant must guard himself against.

The normal course of our ordinary mind is mostly to run and work outwardly in the objective world; but inner contemplation, as has already been explained, implies the

reverse movement. This being so, the beginner who tries to fix his mind in inner concentration all at once for a long period, especially on the 'ajna chakra' will feel a strain on his brain. It is on account of the tension produced by the inward movement of the mind which is deeply connected with the brain. If the sadhaka works beyond his capacity and makes violent efforts to fix his attention in the middle of the eyebrows he runs the risk of damaging the nerve cells of his brain. Acute headache and dullness in the brain, prolonged cooling sensation in the middle of the eyebrows, excessive heat or intense irritation in the forehead are signals of this danger.

Besides, those who, not aware of the coming turns in the spiritual path at which a more expedient and hard work is needed, go too fast in the beginning and work beyond their capacities, get generally tired and exhausted soon and then they give up their sadhana. To avoid these perils the student should start practising concentration for only a few minutes at a time and then slowly increase the duration. If the brain gets fatigued and there is headache during contemplation, break the exercise and let your mind relax. Repeat calmly the Lord's name or simply entertain in your mind the attribute of the Lord's benignity. Start the sadhana again when you have regained mental equipoise and physical fitness.

The spiritual journey is not a journey of a day but months and years. Who knows how many lives it will take to reach the final destination! Therefore do not be impatient. Work steadily and calmly. Not a rash, but a steady and regular practice is what is required for success.

Main Obstacles and Aids to Contemplation

There are certain factors that hinder inner contemplation and there are others which help and promote it. The most prominent of them are given below in the hope that an adequate knowledge of them will help the sadhaka in his contemplation.

Obstacles

(a) *Wandering of the mind.*

Wandering is a common disease o mind. Like a monkey who tirelessly tinues to jump from one branch of a t another or from one tree to anothe mind of an ordinary man keeps oscil and moving always. Purposefully or poselessly it runs from one idea to an from one place to another and fro object to another, finding no rest anyw Unlike physical diseases which come leave the body at a certain age this d of the mind comes to a man from his birth and accompanies him to the Is there any cure for this disease? Ye every disease there is a medicine. Thi truth which applies here also. This disease of wandering is not at all incu Although it is very hard to curb wandering of the mind, yet it i impossible to do so. Have there not saints and holy men who controlled minds? Are not such self-controlled though few, still amongst us?

By a life of discipline accompanie detachment and other qualities and p practice of contemplation the mind can tainly be made one-pointed. A s effort with right guidance brings succ the end.

(b) *Sleep.*

The second obstacle which obstruct sadhaka in his work of attaining com silence is sleep. Ordinarily the min experience of only two states. The f the one in which it deals with inward outwardly (thinks, wills, feels, imagin knows) the external gross objects embodied beings. The second is th which it falls into a sleep. Therefo soon as you draw it back from the first of physical thinking it has a tendency into the second state, namely sleep.

The removal of the first obstacle, n the wandering of the mind, makes the dent automatically face the second obs namely sleep, which generally overc

one when the wandering of the mind is stopped. In the negative method of contemplation this obstacle appears soon after one sits for inner concentration, but it is not so in the positive methods where the mind has to be made passive not all at once.

There may be other reasons also for falling asleep while contemplating, such as heavy meals, physical or mental fatigue, certain diseases of the body or insufficient sleep during the previous day.

The hindrance of sleep is harder to overcome than the wandering of the mind. Nevertheless this obstacle can be overcome through proper food, breathing exercises and watchfulness. If all these precautions fail the sadhaka should get up from the asana and walk for a while or do active breathing or wash his face with cold water and then sit down again.

(c) *Temptation from Subtle Planes.*

When the barrier of the mind is crossed by the withdrawal of consciousness from external objects and when the sadhaka does not fall asleep he generally gets in touch with the astral and psychic worlds on the subtle-physical plane. On account of this he begins to have a multitude of subtle experiences of these worlds. None of these experiences is constant; they are just flashes which repeat themselves sometimes very rapidly. Some of them are so seductive that the sadhaka falls into a delusion and becomes complacent. He occupies himself with these experiences for the sake of the temporary thrills they provide. Besides these fleeting visions extraordinary powers like clairvoyance come to him from the higher plane. But these too are not permanent. All these are serious distractions which make contemplation pseudo-contemplation and lead the student astray from the path of Self-realization.

Only those who are spiritually very sincere and highly discriminating can save themselves from such temptations. Occasionally the spiritual guide takes the sadhaka beyond this critical stage of sadhana where many succumb to the temptations. For sadhakas who are advanced in devotion and who perform sadhana under the shelter of surrender to the Lord such obstacles are removed by the Lord Himself.

(d) *The Extremist Attitude.*

There are obstacles which intervene or come of their own accord and there are obstacles which the aspirant sometimes creates for himself by his blind and obstinate excesses, in the matter of some practices which appear to him useful but which are really hindrances. Practices such as prolonged fasting, insufficient sleep, standing continually on one leg, remaining in the chilly cold weather, etc., though regarded as austerities, actually hinder the sadhaka instead of helping him. Some sadhakas resort to such practices on the pretext of showing their power of endurance or merely for displaying their power for the admiration of people. They do not gain inner peace.

To place oneself deliberately in the way of such disturbing influences would be tempting God, as it were, and inviting obstacles. Why dissipate one's energy which can be more usefully spent in fixing one's mind on the Divine, in order to overcome obstacles created by oneself? For learning endurance there are many opportunities for the aspirant provided he is eager to use them. The simple rule in this matter to be followed by students of spiritual contemplation is to seek nothing which interrupts or dissipates but to bear quietly and courageously everything that comes or is sent by God.

AIDS

(a) *Proper Diet*

The food which the spiritual student consumes plays a significant part in his progress in the sadhana. That food is essential not only for the sustenance of the physical body, which is for the sadhaka a means of God-realization, but that it influences also his mental modifications is well-known. What diet should then an aspirant take in order to gain the physical and moral strength which is indispensable for contemplation? There is no inflexible rule in this matter. You must discover for yourself what food

suits you and keeps your body fit and your mind calm and pure. A diet which creates constipation or wind in the stomach or produces a feeling of dullness on the one hand or too much restlessness on the other must be avoided. As a general rule, milk, green vegetables, butter, coarse wheat flour and fresh fruits are good, while meat, eggs, excess of spices, etc. are harmful. One thing that needs special mention here is that the use of all narcotic drugs like opium, charas, bhang, tobacco, on the pretext of their being aids to concentration, is harmful. The same is the case with alcoholic liquors, which must be avoided totally. These intoxicants weaken and poison the finer cells in the brain making the sadhaka unfit for the finer and higher spiritual experiences. Sometimes they bring disorders and even insanity.

(b) *Pranayama, or Conscious Breathing.*

The literal meaning of Pranayama is control of Prana. Prana is not breath, as generally understood. It is the life-force — one of the powers of the soul — which makes the body move through the movement of the nervous and physiological systems.

Breath (Prana) and mind are deeply interconnected. The control of breath leads to the control of the Prana and the control of the Prana leads to the control of the mind. In Hatha Yoga Pranayama is given the highest place and has to be mastered first. But in the yoga of contemplation it is given only a secondary place and regarded as a means of bringing the rhythmic and regular movement of breath which is essential for inner concentration. Pranayama also cleanses the nerves and keeps the body fit.

(c) *Proper Place and Time.*

The sadhaka is required to feel the presence of the Lord all through his day-to-day activities at all places and at all times, but for one-pointed contemplation which requires the entire attention to be exclusively fixed on God he must retreat to a calm and quiet place which is free from the disturbing noises of the world.

The proper time for one-pointed templation is the Brahm Muhurt, the beginning about three hours before th rises. The body and the mind are fresh at that time and it will be eas sit in one posture for a longer time steady mind. This suits almost all p except those who are lethargic and insi Early rising is very important and healthy habit to be inculcated in sadhaka. So one or two hours in the Muhurt should be set apart for conte tion.

Besides, before going to sleep at some time ought to be devoted to jap contemplation. Going to sleep with remembrance of the Lord is good b the subconsciousness keeps on doing by itself during sleep. Thus even slee be used for a noble purpose. During da also one can relax in one's chair office or even in the workshop or hom three or four minutes and reflect true purport of human life. Half-c one's eyes one can whisper silently heart : "Lord, I am thine ; pray take Thy fold." This may be repeated three or four hours during the day — simple thing to do but very efficacious keeps one recollected in regard t Supreme Master even in the turm worldly affairs.

(d) *Regularity.*

If you want sure and quick spi illumination be sincere and regular in contemplation. By the break of even or two you lose much of what you gained through months of practice. through long and very regular practice one reaches unenforced contemplation. not fail to sit for prayers and medi even for a day at the time fixed. The of even one day will do much harm to sadhana, because the break of one day lead to breaks of many days easily.

A Few Inner Experiences

An introvert mind which plunges within the inner recesses of the mind have a number of visions and experi

which lie beyond the pale of an ordinary man busy with the external activities of life. These visions and experiences come to different sadhakas in different ways. They may vary even in quality according to the stage, mode of sadhana, personal inclinations and physiological make-up. This statement may induce some people to say : "Are not these experiences mere hallucinations created by the minds of the sadhakas ?" No, these are not hallucinations. An example will make this clear. Suppose you send some men to the bazaar just to look at the things in it. On their return you ask each one separaetly what he has seen and each one will reply differently. Why is this so ? Because their answers vary you cannot say that what they saw were mere hallucinations. Every one has his private and peculiar samskara ; therefore, while one is attracted by one thing another is attracted by another thing. Consequently many things that are there are not noticed by each of them. But in spite of this variation there are certain prominent things or spots which arrest the attention of every one, even though for a short time. Similarly even though the inner experience of sadhakas may vary there are several common experiences. Some of them are given below.

1. In the preliminary stage of inwardness certain sounds resembling the beating of a drum loudly or gently, the flowing of a river, thunder, humming of bees, etc. will be heard in the right ear. Certain colours also appear between the eyebrows. These sounds and colours come and go and are constituted of the five elements. On experiencing these sounds and colours in the course of their sadhana some sadhakas imagine that they have made great advance. This shows their ignorance. There is nothing spiritual in these sounds and colours ; they are merely reflections in the sound consciousness caused by the contact of the mind with the subtle physical plane. These sounds and colours distort consciousness and one-pointedness. An adept will treat them as mere sounds and colours.

2. A little more inwardness takes one into the astral plane where also a number of things are seen and experienced. Very often voices whisper in the ears. Sometimes messages are heard clearly, but only a few of them are genuine and many are misleading. Against the latter the sadhaka must be on his guard. He should not blindly follow any message or voice or suggestion. At this stage of contemplation numerous visions are seen. Many of them are symbolic representations of things, states and forces of the astral plane, but some represent actual happenings in that plane. It is better not to entangle oneself with such visions and voices which come and go. One must look at them with indifference and try to be one-pointed. In fact sincere and fervent sadhakas do not stay in this stage for long but pass it by quickly.

3. (a) After passing out of the astral plane one-pointedness of concentration gains momentum and soon becomes mature. One begins to have the elevating and blissful experiences of the higher planes. Saints of a high order, living or dead, often appear. They come to help the sadhaka. They should be saluted and adored. Sometimes they talk on spiritual matters and guide the sadhaka.

(b) Visions of gods and goddesses also appear at this stage. The god of one's choice appears frequently. He even gives darsan when the sadhaka is sitting or lying in a relaxed mood with his eyes open. Such experiences produce great bliss and uplift the mind. The sweet and soothing influence of these visions lasts many days.

(c) Sometimes events happening in distant places and those which are going to happen at a future date are reflected in the consciousness in full detail. The power of mind-reading also manifests itself. At this stage the sadhaka can, if he likes, develop the powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience and telepathy very easily, but if he does so his spiritual progress will be hindered. The adept therefore always warns the sadhaka not to waste his time in developing these powers or 'vibhutis'.

(d) Flashes of light of a more dynamic character occur frequently. An effulgent golden light sometimes appears before the

eyes when one is sitting quietly and all things disappear in it. This lasts only for a few minutes. Such flashes are indications of the dawning of spiritual realization.

(e) One hears a peculiar thrilling sound issuing from the real Heart centre in the middle of the chest and this quickly permeates the entire body like an electric current. It makes the sadhakas completely oblivious of the external world. After about fifteen minutes this sound is centralized in the 'ajna chakra' and turns into a dazzling light. This is a very blissful experience. Some words also appear as if written by lightning on the forehead. They are at times so clear that one can read them, word by word. These two experiences come generally to those who practise mantra japa for long periods.

4. When consciousness becomes sufficiently deep these passing visions and flashes cease and one begins to feel an inner spiritual ecstasy which goes on increasing regularly. There is so great an ecstasy that one is irresistably pulled within. At this stage all the worldly temptations have no power to lure the sadhaka. He feels himself drawn again and again to solitary places, where he can sit alone and enjoy the inner delight. The sadhana now takes a new turn and becomes more and more spontaneous. The sense of personal effort fades away, but the sadhana becomes more vigorous and quicker. Having moved further this spiritual ecstasy becomes merged in an ineffable deep peace. All the outer and inner world is competely obliterated and the consciousn replunged in its static repose. Here b and freedom, pain and pleasure, w other pairs of opposites, cease to exis ple awareness, silent, attributeless a mutable, alone abides. This is accord the 'New Vedantins' the merging w Brahman. To this very state the Bu give the name of 'nirvana', the ext of the world of name and form. The experience of the immutable and re less Self gives one perfect release fr changes of the gunas. On coming d little from this experience (when th emerges again) the world seems a shadow with no substance in it — an vain and useless play of the unreal qu

This experience of the silent Self a concomitant view of the world as a s useless and purposeless appearance, a very high experience in the spiritua is not the ultimate or perfect sp experience. Further on Consciousnes remaining established in its imm poise, again looks, as it were, outsi begins to assimilate the 'All' in its to gradually realize its essential onese the 'All'.

There are two more intermediary e ences (which are not dealt with before one reaches the perfect experie which the gulf between the nirgu saguna, personal and impersonal, and God, is completely bridged, or, properly, they merge and mingle any logic or reason, in the Spiritual Ab

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Had He a thousand sons they must needs be the same son.

— ECKHART.

* * * *

God is the mirror in which you see yourself, as you are His mirror in which He contemplates His Names and their principles. Now His Names are not other than Himself, so that the reality is an inversion.

— IBN ARABI.

THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL

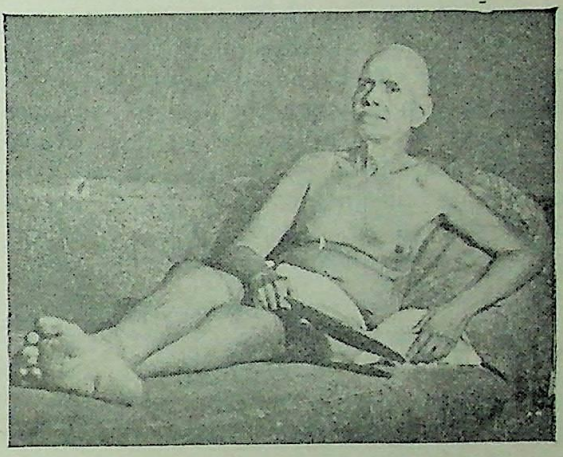
AS EXPOUNDED BY SRI RAMANA

By
K. K. NAMBIAR [1]

HOW often have I heard it stated even by educated people that religion is based on superstitions and philosophy demands unquestioning faith on the part of the seekers? I had no ready answer to these questions until I came to Sri Ramana Maharshi and got acquainted with his teachings. There was no need of rituals; no place for dogmas and nothing had to be taken for granted. All that was required was a steady quest to know the truth — a scientific research to find out the secret of one's own self. In this process the contact with others who have realized the truth and have experience in the field of similar research would obviously be of help; for wasn't it Isaac Newton who said "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants"? Sat-sang, or contact with spiritual giants, will certainly help cut short the long and tedious process of investigations.

Scientific investigations have all along been to discover the truths of external nature, though in recent times science has tended to become somewhat transcendental. The understanding of the process of the mighty atom and thereby of relativity are beyond the range of the average intellect, yet these are accepted as truths because their effects can be demonstrated and can be experienced by one and all. An understanding of the inner self of man being naturally much more difficult is beyond the comprehension of most human beings. The exceptions are those few realized souls like Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana, who having had direct perception of the truth, could guide others in their path towards realization.

In this context I am reminded of a conversation I had thirty years ago with Mr. Grant Duff during one of his



visits to Ramanasramam of Tiruvannamalai. After an interview with Sri Bhagavan he was sitting on a chair outside the thatched shed where now stands the Mathrubhutheswara temple. Dressed in a silk suit and wearing a bow-tie he looked an image of peace and good will. Why had he come all the way to this far off place? I was anxious to start a conversation with him and so introduced myself to him as an engineer in Government service. In the short conversation that ensued he stated that he had spent the best part of his life in the study of comparative religions and philosophies and that he had come to the conclusion that the only philosophy that could stand the test of science was Sankara's Advaita, which is the same philosophy taught by Sri Bhagavan, in his unique way. Mr. Grant Duff added that we should consider ourselves fortunate to have been born in this era and been able to see Sri Bhagavan in flesh and blood. Such a testimony from a man like him added to my deep-rooted conviction that I was fortunate to have been drawn to Sri Ramana and that I need not go

[1] Introduced to our readers in *The Mountain Path*, October 1965 issue, p. 274.

beyond the precincts of Ramanasramam to seek enlightenment.

What exactly is the path to follow ? In the words of Justice Sundaram Chettiar in his Foreword to Self-Realization the method is :— " Retreat ever within thine own self ; seek the source whence the restless mind spins out an unceasing web of thoughts ; brush aside the springing thoughts ; concentrate at the root of the thought, and take repose in that stillness and quietude. So much is thy effort, and what next is one for experience and inner realization and does not admit of exposition in words." If we try to seek further elucidation of this ultimate state and understand it, it will only be a knowledge or ' information '. What is required is ' realization ' of one's true state.

Bhagavan's teaching is unique in does not stipulate any previous prep or belief in any faith or dogma on th of the aspirant. One need not even gr existence of God before starting on th of enquiry into one's own self. This but significant difference was point to me during a conversation b Gnanananda swamiji of Gnanananda vanam, Tirukoilur. Whereas the Maha and Upanishads deal with the quest and end up in the discovery ' Tat-tva that God is one's own Self, the e taught by Sri Bhagavan works in the direction in seeking one's own Self an ing up with the realization of the S Self. This then is the Direct Path a scientific approach to Self-Realizatio

Why Toil for Knowledge?

G

EVERYONE is working for some desired result. The scientist spends day and night at the laboratory unravelling the mysteries of external nature. Amenities, comforts and destructive weapons are discovered. But all this is endless toil. Nature is boundless. The fruits and pleasures we derive are transitory. Besides, Sri Bhagavan asks, of what use is knowing so many things, without knowing the Self, the knower ? When once the Self is known, one realises that all is one, the Self. Then what is there further to be known ?

There is also the lure that Jnana is our natural state, a state of poise in which one is unaffected by the dualities of pleasure and pain, etc. This state of eternal bliss is attainable only by knowledge of the Self. This is what distinguishes a jnani from an ajnani. An ajnani's mind is centred on the transcient world.

The rise and extinction of the ego is an eternal plight of the jivas. The waters of the ocean rise up as clouds, conden as rain and return to their source, without stopping, in spite of obstacle bird after soaring high and flying the limitless sky finds no resting plac and is bound to retrace its course. larly the jiva that rises from th though it may toil on many paths, d stop till it reaches the Self, its sour eternal resting place.

Who does not like to clean his spe before using them ! No one says i act of ignorance. It is done to obt clearest vision. Similarly, Atma vic cleansing the mind. Sri Bhagavan dhyana is harmonious with worldly and never a hindrance to it. *Akhan vritti* is the state of the purified wherein Self-effulgence shines of itse basic impurity is forgetfulness of Se identification with the body. Jnana moval of the same, by becoming Se knowing Self. This is Sri Ramana's

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS:
POET AND MYSTIC

By
GLADYS DE MEUTER

GONZALO de YEPES married Catalina Alvarez in the small Spanish town of Fontiveros in the year 1529.

Their union was blessed with three sons the youngest of whom, Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, was born in 1542. A short time later, the head of the household died, leaving his poverty-stricken widow to earn a livelihood. She did this by plying her trade of weaving.

When John Alvarez was twenty years of age he entered the Carmelite Order. He was ordained priest in 1567 and met Madre Teresa of Avila to whom he became spiritual counsellor five years later.

Participants of an intense spiritual life, Madre Teresa and Fray John felt impelled to reform the Carmelite Order which had lost its initial vigour and discipline. To this end, they devoted their energies and became known as the Discalced Carmelites because they went about barefoot.

During the years that followed, the attitude of the Calced toward the Reform became hostile. Fray John was imprisoned.

Fed on a frugal fare of bread, sardines and water, John of the Cross was scourged thrice a week before being led back to his windowless cell. One night in 1578 Fray John escaped, and found refuge in the South of Spain.

When the opposition to the Reform had abated, John of the Cross was sent to solitary La Peñuela. From thence he went to Ubeda for medical care. It was there that he died on the night of December 13, 1591.

Canonized by Pope Benedict XIII, St. John of the Cross was declared Doctor of the Church in 1926.

* * *

St. John of the Cross was ever stirred to compassion by the plight of the sick and sorrowful, but those undergoing interior trials were his special concern. It was in order to guide souls on their spiritual pilgrimage that this gentle Carmelite took up the pen.

His teachings are clear and concise, revealing astonishing analytical ability and deep psychological insight. They exerted a profound influence on Saint Therse of Lisieux who wrote : 'The works of St. John of the Cross have been a beacon of light to me.'

The Way which St. John of the Cross depicts leads to the loftiest spiritual heights. It is therefore not an 'easy' path but one to be undertaken only by the stouthearted.

The stages of the journey are described in 'The Ascent of Mount Carmel' and 'Dark Night'.

These works deal with the two dark nights or two phases of the Night which have to be borne before divine union may take place. The first phase concerns the purgation of the sensory part of the soul ; the second affects the spiritual faculties of the soul i.e. memory, will, intellect. Of the two, the latter entails the greater suffering.

St. John of the Cross stresses the need for the soul to relinquish inordinate attachments, and to maintain a vigilant watchfulness over the appetites. This struggle is an 'active' one in which the soul seeks to detach herself from everything not pertaining to her heavenly treasure. Further, the soul is bidden venture beyond intellect-knowledge into the 'night' of Faith.

The 'secret ladder' which is discovered by the soul when the clamour of sense-attachments have been stilled, is Faith, and it is in this sure guide that the soul must trust implicitly. The light of Faith is so brilliant that it transcends the dimmer ray

of the intellect which is blinded by the intense glory. The journey therefore takes place in a darkness which is in truth an excess of divine light.

The Way is straight and narrow. Images conjured up by the imagination are pitfalls to be avoided by the wary soul. The mind is an aid up to a point. But when discursive meditation ceases the soul must play a 'passive' role and await the divine inflowing.

When the soul has undergone the trials and tribulations of the dark night of Faith, she gives expression to her joy in sacred song. In these stanzas she recounts how she passed through the darkness to ascend the 'secret ladder' where, mantled in Quiet she was led by the light of Love within her into the Presence of her Beloved where :

'His gentle caress
Banished my senses.

Forgetting all, I lost myself,
I lay my face against Him.
In the stillness I left myself.
My cares were discarded
To lie forsaken midst the lilies.'

Writings from 'The Ascent of Mount Carmel' and 'Dark Night'

'In order to draw closer to God it is needful to trust in dark faith for guidance and light, and no reliance must be placed on understanding, taste, feelings or imagination.' (Ascent 2).

'Desire to be led always —
Towards that which is arduous, not easy.
Towards that which is unpleasant, not agreeable.
Towards that which is unrewarding, not gratifying.
Towards that which is humble and lowly, not high and most valuable.
Do not desire anything — long for nothing.
Seek the least in worldly possessions instead of desiring the best.
Yearn to possess poverty in all things.
(Ascent 13).

'Those who seek to draw closer t by means of forms and images, delude selves if they do not desist from methods which are suitable only for ners....Clinging to these exercises endeavour to meditate, but without s they experience listlessness, wearine aridity.... It is not by the toil imagination that such will receive sp fare, but by surrendering to the sp peace and interior stillness . . . Lack understanding they consider themselve idle. They therefore disturb their quiet with mental activity....per thus, they draw further away from sp repose.' (Ascent 2-

'It is when pleasure and joy are e enced by beginners in their holy exe and they consider that the light of grace shines full upon them that obscures this light and prevents en and participation in the pleasant sp water which they had tasted as oft they had wished.....They are now l such obscurity that they know not way to turn in their mental activities inner sensory parts having been pl into this darkness, they seem to ma progress in meditation. They are l such spiritual aridity that not only do derive neither pleasure nor joy in thei exercises, but experience a strong ava and dislike for them.

As already mentioned, God beholds growth and puts them away from honeyed Bosom in order that they ma strengthened. He discards the swad clothes and lowers them from His arm that they may learn how to walk.' (Night 8-

'In order that the intellect may u with the divine light and become perfe the night of contemplation must purify extinguish the intellect's natural light cast it into obscurity. This obscurity continue until the inellect's usual mod understanding has been replaced by di knowledge. Because the intellect has deprived of that which was familiar t the night into which it is plunged co

bitter and intense anguish. It appears to be a substantial obscurity because it is felt in the inmost being of the spirit.

Since the bestowal of love in the divine union is a heavenly affection, it is sublime, impalpable, fragile, and an inner experience, transcending every desire, attachment and impulse of the will. Consequently, the will must first undergo purification and be rid of all the desires and attachments within it before it may participate in love's divine union of rapture and joy, which in its sublimity transcends the natural inclinations of the will. (Night 9-3).

'. . . At the outset of the spiritual night the burning of love is not experienced because love's flame has not yet caught. However, love of God is kindled so fervently within the soul from the beginning, that the soul's greatest sorrow and anguish during these tribulations of the night is that it has been abandoned by God.

This apprehension, then, is the keenest suffering which assails the afflicted soul. If a man could be confident that all is not lost but that what he endures is for his good — and this is so — that God is not wrathful towards him, he would be unaffected by these adversities — instead he would feel an upliftment of spirit to know that God looks graciously upon him.' (Night 13-5).

'I must not fail to enlarge upon why the divine light which always illumines the soul does not illumine it at once, as it does later, but instead is the cause of tribulations and darkness . . .

The evils and darknesses which the soul undergoes when assailed by this light are not darknesses and evils inherent in the light but inhere in the soul itself. Illumined by this light the soul beholds these evils. Although the soul is illumined from the very beginning, it is able at first to perceive only that light which is closest — it beholds then the sorrows and darknesses within itself. It is divine compassion which enables the soul to view itself; before the advent of this supernatural light it had been unable to do so.' (Night 13-10).

'O spiritual soul, when you perceive that your desires are obscured, your affections arid and disciplined, your powers rendered helpless for inner exercises, do not be cast down; know this to be a blessing in which God is setting you free from yourself and removing activity from you. However excellent the outcome of your activities may have been, your work was imperfect, incomplete and insecure — due to their unclean state and clumsiness — now that God holds your hand you are as one afflicted with blindness, for you are led through the darkness by your divine Guide to a destination unknown to you. Alone you would have failed to reach this place, however well you would have used your hands and feet.'
(Night 16-7)

In his 'Spiritual Canticle' St. John of the Cross describes in lyric verse the progressive stages of the purgative, illuminative, unitive and Beatific states. These stanzas, emerging from the author's mystical understanding glow with exquisite beauty, tenderness and warmth. They record the soul's quest for her Beloved.

PASSAGE TAKEN FROM
'THE SPIRITUAL CANTICLE'

Where are You hiding
Beloved, while I languish?
Like the stag You bounded away
After having caused me anguish.
I called to You, but You were not there.

(The soul sets out on her spiritual journey).

(The soul delivers herself with rapture into the divine embrace).

The air's living breath,
The nightingale's pure melody,
The beauteous, vibrant grove,
The night's still ecstasy,
Merge into the tender Flame.'

(The ineffable state of God-Union is achieved).

The 'Living Flame of Love' was composed in Granada between the years 1585-1587. In this work St. John of the

Cross teaches how the soul attains to the Beatific Vision when the three veils separating her from the Beloved have been rent.

When attachment to worldly things, gratification of sense-appetites, have been set aside, there remains the thin veil of the natural life to be removed. With the removal of this last veil the Beatific state is realized.

A Selection from 'The Living Flame of Love'

'It seems to the soul that it is ablaze in the divine union, that it partakes of splendour and love, that in its inmost being overflow rivers of joyous, resplendent light, and that vivifying waters rise from its centre, those waters which the Son of God promised would gush forth in like souls.

The soul witnesses further that each time the fragile flame of love, alight within the soul besets it, its action bestows a resplendence at once tender and strong. The glory bestowed upon the soul by the flame of ove when it assails it, appears to confer upon the soul everlasting life and to rend the veil of mortality, that it lacks little, yet due to this lack the soul is unable to receive perfect and everlasting glory. So it is with fervent longing that the soul prays that the flame of the Holy Spirit will now tear asunder the veil of mortality by that tender communion in which that Beatitude which is withheld at every meeting, will now be conferred.' (Commentary).

'To use spiritual terms — to be in darkness signifies one thing ; to be in obscurity signifies another. We have mentioned already that to be in darkness signifies being blinded by sin. However, one can be in obscurity without being a sinner and this in a twofold manner —

In regard to the natural, being deprived of light or understanding of those things pertaining to the natural ; in regard to the supernatural, being deprived of light or understanding pertaining to the supernatural.' (Stanza 3-71)

'. . . Because the soul of its own a could not waken by itself, and God could waken it, this awakening is rightly called a divine awakening.' (Stanza 4-

'The knowledge and experience acq of the Divine in the spiritual awaken beyond the limitations of words. Be this awakening is the Divine Perfe enlightening the inmost being of the that is, the heart, a vast and mighty is heard within it, that of many excell — of a limitless number of divine vi The soul is rooted in these virtues, embedded in them, and may be liken the awesome strength of an army in b array — these virtues render the soul der and pleasing . . .' (Stanza 4-1

'The soul neither experiences wea nor fear when the awakening takes for two reasons.

Firstly, the soul exalted to this whose sensory part has undergone in purgation and is therefore in harmony the spirit, does not experience the suff and harm which do those souls who purged in their sensory and spiritual do not qualify for spiritual intimations. does not suffice however, to avert the pa such harm in the light of such majesty splendour.

Secondly, and this is the important re as the soul mentions in the first verse, makes His Presence felt in the soul great gentleness. Bestowing majesty splendour upon it in order to exalt it, sees to it that no harm befalls the so

He strengthens the sensory and man His Majesty in tender and loving fa making no use whatever of the senses, the result that he who experiences thi no knowledge whether it takes place out of the body.

The soul is therefore aware of tender and love, of strength, sovereignty majesty, for in God everything is Strength accompanies rapture, and

night of tender love safeguards the soul in rder that it may be strengthened while eing caught up in rapture, and instead of uccumbing to weakness remain steadast . . .' (Stanza 4-12)

'The soul describes God as residing ecretly within its heart, the reason being hat the divine meeting takes place in its nnermost being.

The soul which is no longer attached to vorldly objects, in which there exists neiher desires nor conceptual forms, and who s perfected in purity, is conscious of the ecret and intimate embrace of the Beloved esiding within it.' (Stanza 4-14)

'When the perfected soul experiences this ivine awakening within it, everything vhich takes place is perfect, since the eavenly Bridegroom is the cause of these happenings. The soul therefore uses these words in the following verses :

'Beloved, Your fragrant breath
Is laden with sublime goodness.
You expand my heart with tender love.'
(Stanza 4-16)

In unique and masterly fashion St. John of the Cross instructs the soul on her inward journey.

If the Way is strewn with the thorns of negation, it is to reveal to the soul in travail that crusifixion of spirit is necessary so that the Immortal Bloom of Glory may rise from sorrow's dark tomb.

Breathing the rarefied air of sublime mystical heights, St. John of the Cross sings how the sacred tears of the 'Dark Night' form the serene loveliness of the Celestial Pearl.

To Heart's Content

By *'Vishnu'*

ONE, Sri T. Viswanatham, was posted as Joint Sub Registrar of Tiruvannamalai. He wrote to me about his good ortune to spend the closing period of about ix months of his official career at this holy lace and of the much yearned for opportunity he hoped to have the darshan of Sri Bhagavan and intimated to me that he would ake up duty in about a week. I showed his letter to Sri Bhagavan and the subject vent out of my thoughts.

About a week or so afterwards at about -30 p.m. a person who looked orthodox vas prostrating before Sri Bhagavan. Evidently he had read the Notice Board put up by the Ashram management forbidding the devotees to touch Sri Bhagavan's feet. This person, obviously wishing to avoid being objected to, but unwilling to forego his heart's desire, observed the letter of the rules by clasping his hands behind him, away from Sri Bhagavan while he prostrated like a gymnast, and rubbed his head over the feet of Sri Bhagavan, as a calf would do when fondled, and Sri Bhagavan allowed full scope for this indulgence! Then he turned towards me and said: "Sri T. Viswanatham." Who had told him so? The newcomer hadn't spoken a word! Perhaps Sri Bhagavan had a sixth sense to scent a devotee!!

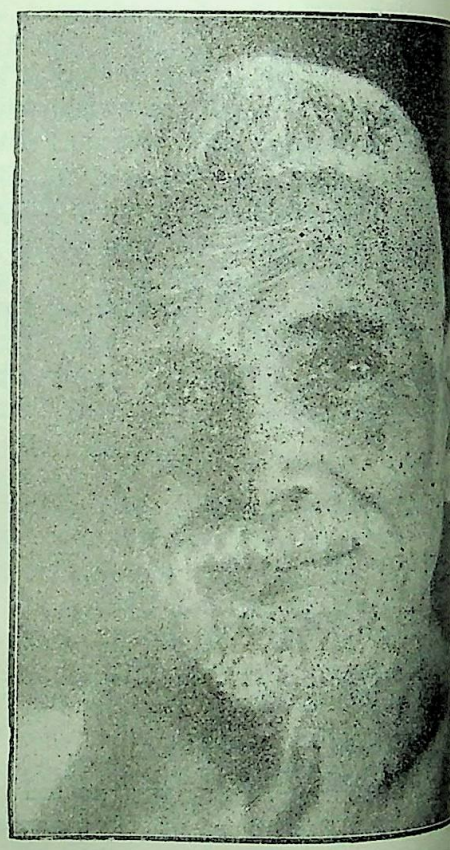
CONTRIBUTION OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSH TO THE VEDANTIC MYSTICISM

Prof. G. V. KU

I

Introduction

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI, the great modern sage of Tiruvannamalai, did not bother about his contribution to any branch of mysticism. He lived the pure life of a *jnanin* ever since he attained realization as a boy of sixteen. He was not interested in any philosophy or metaphysics nor in book learning. What he realized he gave in simple words to those who were needy. He also gave the path that led to his realization. Intensely practical as he was in spiritual matters like the Buddha, he did not bother about the nonessentials and concentrated only on the essential — absolutely essential. He did not write much, nor speak much ; whatever he wrote or spoke was in response to the questions of the disciples or the seekers with the exception of the Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala. He did not found any new religion or establish any new branch or system of philosophy. Whatever he gave was his own, corroborated by the utterances of the sages of the past, the glorious tradition of mysticism — Vedantic and others. He presented the old mystical philosophy of the Vedanta from a fresh angle. Thus we can't speak of his mystical philosophy as we speak of Kant's or Hegel's philosophy. Anyway, it was a new way, a new approach to life and yet it was old. The path he taught was twofold — (1) the path of enquiry and (2) the path of surrender ; the aim being complete annihilation of the ego, the '*chit-jada-granthi*'. In his own words, the '*margana marga*'[1] and the '*majjana marga*'.[2] In the Ramana Gita a third path, viz. control of breath (*prana nirodha*) is also mentioned,[3] but this is a part of the



'*margana marga*'. Maharshi often "First find out who you are or When asked by a disciple whet teachings were similar to those of S he replied : "People say so. Every person has his own way of expressi had great regard for Sankara wh regarded as an incarnation of Siva translated into Tamil Sankara's mino like *Vivekachudamani* and *Atmabod* recognized old traditions and sages past not only of the Hindus, but also Muslims and Christians and so

[1] *Ramana Gita*, (1966) II, 9.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

uoted them. He said that the Gita and the ible are the same and the word 'Islam' eans surrender.

II

Affinity with the Vedantic Mystic Thought

Before we proceed to point out his contribution to the Vedantic mysictism or the niqueness of his teaching, let us refer to ne salient features of the Vedantic mystical ought.

Sri Ramana belongs to the Indian tradion of Rishis and, as remarked by Dr. Radhaishnan, 'adopts the metaphysical position f the Advaita Vedanta.' He is said to have enewed the Advaitic tradition of Sri ankara and resuscitated the primacy of ne path of knowledge after a long ascency of the Bhakti cult.

Even though, in general, the Upanishads ave a common trend of mystical thought, ere are three different approaches to the ltimate Reality, namely the cosmological, ne theological and the psychological ways. he first two ultimately lead to the third, ne psychological way, being the crucial ne. It consists in stating that what we call ne experience of 'I' is the nucleus of our hole field of experience in life. This is ne approach to attaining Ultimate Reality rough one's self designated as 'I'. In his mmentary on Brahma Sutra I. 1. i. ankara says this very clearly. He says at our experience of 'I', pure and simple, the same as Brahman. The great Vedantic atements such as 'This Atman is rahman',[4] 'Consciousness is Brahman',[5] 'That thou art'[6] express in simple lanage this identity between pure consciousss as 'I' and the Ultimate Reality. The me is borne out by the various parables curring in the Upanishads. For example, e famous dialogue between Yajnavalkya d his wife in the Brihadaranyaka Upaniad,[7] the dialogue between Indra and rochana in the Chandogya Upanishad[8] d that between Brgu and his son Svetatu in the same Upanishad[9] point to this ry truth.

The Vedanta further states that the nature of the Atman or Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss. It is symbolised by what is known as Omkara. The Mandukya Upanishad and the Karikas of Gaudapada[10] state elaborately that it consists of three and a half matras — A+U+M. 'A' stands for the Self residing in the waking state. 'U' for the same residing in the dream state and 'M' stands for the same in sound sleep. The fourth (*turiya*) transcends them all. Names and forms in the whole universe are the passing phases, as manifestations of this Om which is their substratum. In other words 'Brahman is real, while the phenomenal world is unreal'. This is traditionally termed '*viveka*' (in its philosophical sense). The world apart from Brahman is unreal, while the world as Brahman is real.

This doctrine is explained in the Vedanta in two ways: (1) the positive (*anvaya*) and (2) the negative (*vyatireka*). 'All this is Brahman',[11] 'All this is Atman',[12] 'Brahman is all this',[13] 'Atman is all this',[14] are the typical expressions of the former, while 'not this, not this'[15] and the like express the latter.

The Vedantic tradition lays down two ways of realizing the Reality — (1) the theistic (*saguna upasana*) and (2) the nontheistic (*nirguna upasana*) worship. The former is for the less astute, the latter for the more astute, the higher evolved seekers. These ways are, however, not mutually exclusive or opposed to each other. Both of them lead to the same goal.

In the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi and elsewhere[16] in the Upanishads we come across the path of Self-enquiry.

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4 *Brih. Up.*, IV. 4. 5; II. 5. 3.
5 *Aitareya Up.*, V. 3.
6 *Chand. Up.*, VI. 8. 7.
7 *Brih. Up.*, II. 4. 1-4. IV. 5. 1.
8 *Chand. Up.*, VIII. 7. 1.
9 *Chand. Up.*, VI. 8. 7.
10 *Mandukya Up.*, I. 1.
11 *Chand. Up.*, III. 14. 1.
12 *Brih. Up.*, II. 4. 6.
13 *Mundaka Up.*, II. 2. 11.
14 *Ibid.*, VII. 25. 2.
15 *Brih. Up.*, III. 9. 26.
16 *Katha Up.*, II .1.

Yajnavalkya says: "The Self should be seen, heard, reflected and meditated upon." Sankara calls this path '*vichara*'[17] or '*viveka*'[18] and glorifies it in his *prakarana granthas*. Later writers like Vidyaranya refer to it and discuss it. Sankara refers to meditation based on following the sound (*nadanusandhana*),[19] which is also referred to in the Upanishadic literature. The Bhagavad Gita refers to this path of enquiry in a verse in the XV Chapter.[20]

The Vedanta also refers to the Dahara Vidya[21] or Hardavidya. Heart is the seat of the Atman, it states, and one should concentrate there, to attain Self-realization; even the Bhagavad Gita[22] refers to it.

Side by side with Self-knowledge the Vedanta glorifies the doctrine of Bhakti too. We find references to this doctrine in the Katha[23] and the Svetasvatara[24] Upanishads in particular. Sankara in his stotras glorifies it and Ramanuja in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras refers to it as '*prapatti*'. The Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata are well-known for eulogising it.

Though Vedanta mentions action as necessary, it prefers renunciation to action.[25] Sankara states that action is an antithesis to wisdom (*jnana*).[26] In the Bhagavad Gita, however, there is synthesis.

Lastly the Vedanta emphasises the importance of a Guru for realization. The Guru should be a worthy Brahmanishtha,[27] capable of guiding the seeker. He gives initiation to the disciples by a mantra, by look, by touch or by silence.[28] His grace is essential for realization. The Bhagavad Gita extols 'service to the Guru'[29] as one of the virtues that constitute *jnana* and recommends service to, and contact with the *jnanin*.[30] The Vedanta accepts the authority of Sruti and the four *Mahavakyas* as it's pillars.

III

Uniqueness of Ramana Maharshi and his Teachings

So far as Realization is concerned, there is no difference whatever between the traditional Advaitic Vedanta and the teachings of Maharshi. Most of the salient ... of the Vedanta referred to above fi... place in Maharshi's works. Reality ... paths leading to it are dealt with ... The psychological way to it is accep... preferred, the identity between the S... Brahman (*Brahmatmaikya bhava*) ... for granted, both the positive and th... tive ways of expression are approve... the theistic (sometimes) and non... (always) ways are pointed out as g... the method of enquiry and surrend... cribed and the Self is said to reside ... 'Heart'; a worthy Guru and his g... considered essential for realizatio... granting all this affinity, the expre... the methodology of both differs in ... respects. There are certain distincti... prominent features of Ramana Ma... message which is in a way uniq... expressed by Him replying to a que... "Can it be put in other ways to exp... same realization?", "A realized per... use his own language."[31]

Not only was his language unique, ... personality was also unique; or ... because of his personality his langu... also unique. When we read his bi... or the account as given by himself, ... that he became a *jnanin*, a perfec... lized soul, when he was face to fa... death at the age of sixteen. Then he ... ed within, "Who is dying?", "Who ... and discovered once for all that ... might be dying but not the 'I' ... brought about a complete transform... him. Death no longer scared him ... attained a new meaning. All this w... not the result of the study of scriptu...

[17] *Vivekachudamani*, 124.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Prabodha Sudhakara*, 13.
[20] *Bh. Gita*, XV. 4.
[21] *Chand. Up.*, VIII. 1. 2. 3.
[22] *Bh. Gita*, XVIII. 61.
[23] *Katha Up.*, II. 23.
[24] *Svetasvatara Up.*, VI. 23; 18, 14.
[25] *Mund. Up.*, I. 2. 11.
[26] Sankara on *Kena Up.*
[27] *Katha Up.*, II. 9; *Mund. Up.*, 1. 2. 12; *Up.*, IV. 14. 2.
[28] *Bh. Gita*, X. 38. (*sic.*)
[29] *Ibid.*, XIII. 7.
[30] *Ibid.* IV. 34.
[31] *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, (19...

f any discipline and sadhana at the feet of Guru. Whenever any question was asked, e would say in reply what came to him aturally from within, on the authority of is own experience. That is why in his eplies to questions and in his works he lways emphasises the real nature of 'I'. t is the key-word of his message. To one vho is really interested in his spiritual vell-being, this message is simplicity itself. t does not lead into the thorny jungle of netaphysics, technical terms, heavy discus-ions, debates and book learning. As a natter of fact, one has to unlearn what one as learnt. Nor does it stand on the four equisites[32] (*sadhana chatushtaya*) mention-d in Vedantic works for the enquiry into Brahman. What is required is a burning spiration to know 'who I am'. As a matter f fact, every one, even a child knows 'I'. t is the centre of all our activities and our nowledge. But the knowledge that we have f 'I' is only superficial. If this is super-icial what is real knowledge? If a man onstantly investigates into it, goes deeper nd deeper, behind this 'I', to its source, vithout thinking of anything else, he finds hat this superficial 'I' drops off and an wareness of 'I - I' all-pervading within us n the Heart is felt. This is the real 'I', nown as God or Atman or Brahman or vhatever name one may use. Thus one has ot to go far away in search of Reality or od. It is so very near and dear to us, esiding in our very hearts. Maharshi, in his connection, warns that there are not wo 'I's; the 'I' is one only. Due to wrong ssociation with the body the real 'I' is felt s the superficial or the pseudo-I, known as go-'*ahankara*'. I-aham is God, the Real tman, while *ahamkara* is artificial, as the ppendix '*kara*' denotes. Maharshi asks us o enquire into this 'I', concentrate on it nd transcend it. As an aid to this enquiry, n order to still the mind, he recommends ontrol of breath or watching of breath. his path is called by him 'The Path of nquiry', *vichara* or *margana marga*. He alls it also a 'direct path' as it leads us raight to Reality. All other paths lead ltimately to this one.

Maharshi points out the distinction between meditation advised in the Vedantic literature, and the vichara thus: "Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas in vichara or introspection, there is only the subject without the object. Meditation differs from vichara in this way. Vichara is the process and the goal also. 'I AM' is the goal and the final Reality. To hold on to this Pure Being with effort is vichara. When it is spontaneous and natural it is realization.[33]

Similarly vichara is different from meditation — 'I am Brahman'[34] or 'I am Atman'. The latter is only mental or intellectual. Maharshi explains the Upanishadic saying 'I am Brahman' by stating that it means that Brahman exists as 'I' and not 'I am Brahman', that it is not to be supposed that a man is advised to contemplate 'I am Brahman', 'I am Brahman'.

The Upanishadic statement 'The Atman should be seen, etc!' is not properly understood by men, says Sri Ramana. He explains — "It means being completely devoured by the Atman, by the real awareness of 'I'"[35]

He further points out that mere viveka mentioned in the Vedanta is not enough for Self-realization.[36] It is valuable as it gives rise to dispassion (*vairagya*); but what is most essential for Liberation is 'Atmanishtha' — abiding in the Self. Discrimination (*viveka*) can lead us only one step forward,[37] by making us renouncers, by goading us to discard the seeming (*abhasa*) as transitory and to hold fast to the eternal Truth and Presence alone.

The much-quoted statement in the Vedanta, ascribed to Sankara 'Brahman is real, while the world is unreal' is misinterpreted very often. Sri Ramana in this connection says: "It is not at all correct to

32 Sankara on *Brahma Sutra*, I. 1. 1.
33 *Thus Spake Ramana*, (1967) pp. 48-9.
34 *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.
35 *Sad Darsana Bhashya*, 23.
36 *Ramana Gita*, (1966) I, 5.
37 *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, (1958) p. 39.

say that Advaitins or the Sankara school deny the existence of the world or that they call it unreal. On the other hand, it is more real to them than to others. Their world will always exist, whereas the world of the other schools will have origin, growth and decay and as such cannot be real. They say only that the world as world is not real, but the world as Brahman is real. All is Brahman, nothing exists but Brahman, and the world as Brahman is real. Sankara says 'maya' does not exist. He who denies the existence of 'maya' and calls it '*mithya*' or non-existent cannot be called a '*maya-vadi*'.[38]

All this clearly shows that what is implicit in the Vedanta is made explicit and elaborated by him in the *light of his own realization.* He has also pointed out boldly the distinction between old concepts or terms in the Vedanta and the new concepts or terms he has used.

The word 'Hrdayam' for example, that he has used in connection with Self-enquiry is different from the (*anahata*) Chakra in the heart used in the old yogic literature.[39] It is also different from the physical heart on the left side. He explains: 'Hrdayam' (Heart) is different from the physical organ called the heart. 'Hrdayam' is composed of two words 'Ayam' and 'Hrit' meaning, 'This is the centre'. So Hrdayam or the Heart is said to be the expression of the Self. Its place in the chest is on the right side and not on the left." Though it can be said to be the seat of the Self, this is said only for the sake of understanding. The Self is everywhere and it is not correct to locate it; but only because we are body conscious we have to explain it so. This 'Hrdayam' is distinct from 'Hrdakasa' of old Vedantic and Tantric literature. Reference has already been made to Daharavidya or Hardavidya. Kapali Sastri, in his introduction to *Sad Darsana Bhashya,* has pointed out the distinction between Dahara vidya and the 'Sadvidya' of Sri Ramana.[40] He says that in the former "for purposes of meditation one has to form, by the imaginative mind, a concept of the Saguna Brahman or Personal God, and fixing it in the place calle Guha, the cavity of the Heart, medita it. In the Sadvidya it is not indis to have an intellectual knowledge e the personal or the impersonal B Nor is it necessary to conceive a symbol of the Purusha, or any cavit dwelling place of the Purusha. N suggested that the Saguna Brahman be fixed in the imagined Dahara Aka cavity of the Heart-Centre and then tated upon. As Brahman the all-pe is the Self in every one's heart, effu the imperishable I-consciousness, a quest for the origin and support own being naturally impels the lif or inspires the mind to move towa origin of its own movement. And search for the Self the knot of ignor the heart (*Hrdaya-granthi*) is looser ultimately cut asunder; the soul is l from the bodily entanglement and to its true state. The origin and su the 'I-thought' or ego-sense is thu ed in the Heart as one's own Self."

Another thing that Sri Ramana e ses, as is also mentioned in Vedanti and by Sankara,[41] is that one uncon enjoys the bliss of one's true nature sleep. There is neither you, nor I, world with its problems, nor deat ego is merged in the Self. People sleep is ignorance, but it is not should learn this lesson from soun Search for our true nature should st this experience of ours in sound sle

Sri Ramana calls this path Maha Y other yogas viyoga, i.e. separation fr or Self, is implied; first separation for granted and then means are recc ed for the union. But in this dire there is already union with the Se we are already the Self. We have s know that we are the Self. Hence t is superior to all other yogas. It c them all.[42] In this Maha Yoga, as

[38] *Thus Spake Ramana,* (1967) pp. 75-
[39] *Ramana Gita,* (1966) V, 10.
[40] *Sad Darsana Bhashya*: Introduction.
[41] Sankara on *Brahma Sutra,* II. 1. 6.
[42] *Upadesa Sara,* (1965) 10.

elaborated, there is the search for the source of the ego, resulting in its annihilation. Maharshi emphasises that we are already realized. What is important is to remove the untruth that we are not realized. Realization is not anything new to be acquired. If it were so, it would not be worth while. The idea is Vedantic, but Maharshi has developed it very explicitly.

The traditional Vedanta has firm faith in the Sruti and considers it authoritative. Sankara is very emphatic on this point and asks us to reflect on these fine great utterances in the Upanishads. This he did with the object of reviving Hinduism. But Sri Ramana, in spite of his firm faith in the Vedas and the Vedanta, does not ask us to rely on them and reflect on them. For modern man, who may or may not have any religion, he prescribes the enquiry, 'Who am I?' which does not require book learning, nor performing rituals and can be such a vital and immediate quest. "One should know one's Self with the eye of wisdom. The Self is within the five sheaths; but books are outside them,[43] he said.

This path appeals to the modern man because it does not ask him to have blind faith in it. One has to experiment, verify and find out the truth for oneself. Thus it is perfectly scientific and rational; because science demands that nothing should be accepted only because so and so says it. One's infallible experience is the true guide here. It is universal and meant for all, as it is free from any dogma or doctrine, not hampered by fossilised tradition, not restricted to any caste, creed or colour.

Sri Ramana prescribes the path of surrender to those who cannot follow the path of enquiry. In this path one has to surrender every thing including one's thoughts, worries, etc. to one's real Self, not to any outside agency. Maharshi states that both these paths are at bottom one, because 'being devoured by the Self' is common to both.

Difficulties in these paths are removed by the guidance and grace of a worthy Guru, who need not take a human form. The real Guru is within and out of compassion he takes a human form to guide the seeker. Guru is not a body. From the point of view of the Guru, there is no Master-disciple relationship, but from the point of view of the disciple, such a relationship does exist. Inner contact with the Guru is more valuable than the physical contact.

With regard to action and knowledge (*jnana*) Sri Ramana's thoughts appear to be different from Sankara's. He recommended selfless action without desire for its fruit and surrender to God; such action leads to salvation. Action and knowledge are not opposed to each other. One's hands might be busy, while the head is calm and cool, engrossed in the Self. Action cannot bind or free, as it is non-sentient. The notion 'I am doing' is binding. One need not be a recluse for attaining Self-realization; nor is it necessary to leave the family life and retire into a forest. The thought 'I am a sannyasin' is equally harmful. Wherever we are we can try to still the mind and attain to Self-knowledge. To men of this age such instruction is highly suitable and valuable.

He gave some new definitions of old terms often used in the Vedantic and yogic literature, in the light of his realization, e.g.

Dhyana — That natural no-mind state of the Self where there is no triad of meditator, meditation and the object of meditation.

Upasana — The natural (effortless) state (of the Self) during practice.

Sravana — Hearing the Vedantic texts or the Guru's own words or knowing intuitively that the source of the I-thought is different from the body, etc.

Manana — Search for the Self.

Nididhyasana — Inherence in the Self.

Pranayama — Watching the breath with the mind.
Outbreathing = I am not this (naaham).
Inbreathing = Who am I? (koham).
Retention of Breath = I am He (soham).

Solitude — Making the mind still.

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43 *Who Am I?*, (1968) p. 10.

To sum up: His penetrating elaborate treatment of the twofold path, His reinterpretation and expansion of the Vedantic truths, His exclusive and all-embracing emphasis on Self-knowledge (*jnana*) and understanding of the needs of modern man along with His rational and scientific approach — all this stemming from his highest spiritual enlightenment constitute his unique contribution to the Vedantic mysticism.[44]

Not only this much, but the *method* he adopted in bringing home these truths was equally unique. He spoke eloquently through silence. "Silence is uninterrupted speech", he said. Whenever he spo replies were short, matter of fact, humorous and calculated to make the tioner turn inwards. They had approach. His unique personality, his trating divine look full of compassion, all his silence, had a calming influe seekers and dissipated their doub problems.

To those who study His life and his rich contribution not only to the tic mysticism but the mysticism world, will appear unique.

[44] *The Mountain Path*, January 1966, Se rial.

Speak Arunachala

By Ananda

Speak to me, lofty Arunachala
Of what I cannot see
Yet dimly feel myself to be.

Speak to me wise Arunachala
Look past my ugly blight.
Mix my painful darkness with Thy living Light.

Speak to me grey Arunachala
A song or but a word will do,
And I upon my knees shall hand it back to you.

Speak to me distant Arunachala,
Flail out what isn't Thee in me,
And let Thy Peace forever after be.

Speak to me beloved Arunachala
Draw me once more within Thy cavern's raging Silence
Head to floor.

Speak to me mother Arunachala,
I've walked and walked about Thy skirts,
Let me not now thus die of thirst.

Speak to me ageless Arunachala
Don't think I will not come again . . .
No matter what the cost or time or pain.

Speak to me sweet Arunachala
Dance madly to my soul's delight —
As well by day as through the livelong night.

HOLY OBEDIENCE

By
MARIE B. BYLES

Tenko San is a religious teacher of modern Japan. At the beginning of the century he became the unconscious founder of the community of Ittoen, the Garden of the One Light. His teaching is essentially practical and it has many sides. One aspect of it is the need to give in to others and do what they ask. Another aspect is the need for 'moving with the Formless Light' (or God). These two aspects are considered in the following article.

THERE is an amusing episode told by Tenko San of Japan of when he met the friend who asked him to examine the books of a certain firm in Daitokuji whose business he wanted to buy. Tenko San had himself given up a business career and had no desire to enter the business world again. The friend reminded him that his new way of life made it incumbent on him to do whatever anyone asked him to do. For example, at the request of certain ladies he had taken them sight-seeing round various temples. While not altogether agreeing with his friend that his request was right he tacitly did agree, but stipulated that if he did examine the accounts of the firm it would be without favouring either side. The friend was happy with this, but next insisted that he should go properly clad in European clothes. Tenko San did not like this stipulation at all; his dilapidated short black kimono was for him like clerical dress for a priest. The friend teased him but he did not agree. They parted. The friend collected the necessary clothes down to a walking stick, and next day drove back, flung down the clothes and walking stick, gave the time of the appointment, thanked him and drove off.

Tenko San had dismissed the matter from mind. He now realized that the time of the appointed hour was approaching. He took up the bundle and still in two minds started walking towards Daitokuji, saying to himself that he could change into the European clothes in the temple there which his family patronized.

But it turned out that the family temple was at the further end of Daitokuji temple compound and the premises of the firm's business at the beginning of it. His doubts ended; he would go in dressed as he was. After some preliminary suspicion his frankness won the directors' hearts and he made the investigation without difficulty. This story illustrates the dividing line between holy and unholy obedience. Obedience to another's request when it does not conflict with the Inner Light is part of the Ittoen life, the new Life as Tenko San conceived it. And one recalls *The Little Plays of St. Francis*, in which the Saint is depicted as getting another monk to do as he requested 'in the name of holy obedience'. Father Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, defines Roman Catholic holy obedience thus — 'To become free from the need to assert your ego, to be liberated from the desire to dominate others, to remove your selfish desires and so on. Ultimately the idea is that if you remove your own will, you will be directly guided by God, moved by Him in everything. Here is the rule of St. Benedict — it is said that a monk will obey not only his abbot, but also his brethren in so far as this does not conflict with obedience to the abbot and God. The real purpose of obedience is to obey God and give one's will to Him.'

I think that for Tenko San the idea was basically the same, for in both it means self-effacement. But for Ittoen today I am by no means sure that it means more than obedience to the rulers. When a

child leaves school he does the work which the elders determine. He is not asked ; still less is it suggested that he spend a quiet time waiting for the guidance of Light. Perhaps he is too young for this. But in any case it means that if he is determined he will follow his own desires, and get his own way regardless of both the Light and the Elders, and this is certainly not holy obedience. There was the case of the young man who left, got trained in making a special kind of roofing material and ultimately returned on his own terms and continued with his chosen work. There was also the case of the young man to whom had been assigned the work of photographer and who badly wanted to study English instead. He was allowed to take a correspondence course, but ultimately he got his own way and gave up photography completely. I did not hear of quiet seeking for the will of Light, but I doubt very much whether there was any holy obedience either to the Elders or to Light.

When I left hospital a very kind friend let me spend the first period of convalescence in her immaculate home. The stay was unexpected by both of us and I was devoutly thankful to her for coming to the rescue of a friend with no one to look after her. But I had always been a sufferer from claustrophobia. Imagine therefore my horror when I was taken into a room with a large window but with a curtain from side to side so that I could not see out, and with only a tiny part of the window that could be opened and that behind a wardrobe and covered with a blind and fly screen, and this was the middle of a hot summer ! My hostess was extraordinarily kind, but I realized that the only condition upon which I could benefit from her kindness was implicit obedience in every detail for she was very house-proud. Here was a valuable lesson that life and Light were sending and I would be foolish not to learn it. After a day or so of secret rebellion the claustraphobia complex disappeared and I spent two months of painful but happy relaxation. Indeed the stay there was one of the major factors in convalescence.

That was holy obedience, submiss the will of another when it was not co to Light and one's higher Self. Self ment or ending of antagonism is because it means control of one's low or one's ego and effacement of self But submission to the wishes of a stands as usual on a razor's edge, for well become blind obedience and s sion to authority regardless of the guiding Light. To disregard one's desires is self-renunciation, but disreg the desireless Self or Inner Light is the opposite, and it is often hard to the line, especially in the beginning spiritual pilgrimage.

Blind obedience runs contrary to duality and individual talent which a flowers of man's elevation. So perha razor's edge is really between giving desires of egoism on the one hand a need for individuality on the other Ittoen does leave room for the develo of individual talent, and even with Christian monastic orders with their d for obedience there has been roo philosophical and scientfiic genius to

There is no doubt that Tenko San's tees blindly followed his guidance an today they seek the direction of the while the lay disciples look to the ance of the local secretary as they wo Tenko San. But Tenko San himself not make a decision for anyone. Thi reported conversation with him in th of World War II, and let us remembe it took place in Japan whose laws ad of no conscientious objection to m service. If you refused to join the you were shot. A young man who had deeply of Tolstoy and Gandhi ca Tenko San and said —

'The time has come when I must jo army.'

'And what do you think about this

'That is what I am asking you to te I suppose Tolstoy would say I shou join.'

'Have you given thought as to why Tolstoy said people should not join the army?'

'Well, he says we should not kill people'.

'When Tolstoy said this I wonder whether he was actuated by a motive of self or of not-self. If you are merely linking together your own feelings of self with that of the nations, you are not decreasing evil by not joining. Indeed you are adding one evil to another and increasing evil. Reconsider the matter carefully. Can you honestly say you are never guided by the motives of self? If you are not so guided you should refuse to join; then according to the law of our land you would be shot; but that would be good; it would be the result of selflessness. On the other hand, if you merely condemn the government for its motive of self interest while cherishing the same motive yourself, then by refusing to join you are a wrong-doer, for you are merely seeking to justify yourself. Then unless you are convinced of your own innocent selflessness, you should obey the law and enter the barracks.'

Some of Ittoen's members did in fact join the army in the Second World War. But the point I want to make is that Tenko San did not insist upon blind obedience. Another example of this was his attitude towards marriage of members. He always tried to arrange that Ittoen members should marry, but I know of two who did not feel called upon to marry and he did not insist. But whether he would have gone as far as Gandhi in refusing blind obedience, I doubt.

Holy obedience means, moreover, far more than submission to the wishes of others and doing as *they* want. It means also submission to life itself and all that life sends, the apparently unpleasant events as well the unpleasant demands of others. This means the gracious acceptance of suffering, for suffering is part of life and the natural attitude to it is one of antipathy, or in other words assertion of the ego's desire for pleasure and hatred of pain. Nearly all live their lives hating suffering and trying to avoid it and with this objective they spend millions on pills and doctors. And learned people write treatises on suffering and the ending of suffering without either abating their own or helping others to abate theirs. They do not say, 'thank you; now what can I learn from this pain.' And yet that is the only way of wholly transcending it. Buddha said to Baddiya, the former Sakyan Lord, 'If you do not mind if things are thus and not thus and have no harsh thoughts, then you are truly happy.'[1] The attitude of the ordinary person is exactly the opposite; it is a desire —

> To smite this sorry scheme of things entire . . .
> And then to rebuild it nearer to the heart's desire.

That is, he refuses to be obedient to life and the laws of life. If he cuts his finger, he says, 'Blast!' (or something stronger). Or if the wife falls for another man or he contracts a fatal disease or his son disgraces him, his reaction is no different. His mind, emotions and feelings are hurt. Even the Buddhist will forget that the Buddha told the sick and aged Nakulapitar that as long as we look to our bodies for happiness we are looking to what is always changing and decaying, that only the Self provides a refuge, an island amid the stormy waves of life's suffering.[2] Later when Nakulapitar met Sariputta he said he felt as if he had been sprinkled with ambrosia. He had accepted suffering, become obedient to life and taken refuge in Light or what is Beyond.

To meet unpleasant happenings by saying, 'Thank you' means a radical reorientation to life. Yet all the spiritual teachers have inculcated the transcending of all desires. And these include hope as well as fear. How easy it is to write this and how difficult to reorientate our thinking so that it becomes second nature.

And to whom or what do we say 'Thank you'? When I was in hospital being pain-

1 *Minor Anthologies: Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, by Woodward, p. 24.
2 *Kindred Sayings* III: Pali Text Series by F. L. Woodward, pp. 1 and 57.

fully dragged back from the door of death, I was conscious only of the very-nature-of-things-as-they-are, the Cosmic Order of action and reaction. Ramana Maharshi, the Buddha, Christ, Tenko San and many others who have had consciousness of this Cosmic Order have borne witness to the love which enfolds it. But for the majority of us there can be only blind faith in the very-nature-of-things-as-they-are, about which we know very little. But whether blind or not the interesting things that this attitude of obedience to life works very well indeed.

Behind our lives forever
Our karmas stand sublime,
Regardless of our wishes,
Indifferent to time.
And if we kick against them,
Refusing what they bring,
We find the very devil,
A vicious cruel thing.
But if we yield us to them
We find a perfect order,
A wise and loving friend.

The trouble is that this standard attitude to so-called disagreeable happenings is one of strong dislike so that the perfect order cannot be perceived and the loving Friend remains unknown. But the fact is that if we do say, 'Thank you', we find both. If we postulate a Loving Father we can say, 'Thank you' to Him, but this is not necessary for it is a law of life.

But the assertion of self and refusal to obey comes to life again and again and makes us kick against the pricks both of persons and of things. It has far more lives than the proverbial cat. I think the cat because of its nine lives must be one of those archetypal symbols of which Jung speaks, for we meet it in dreams as requiring to be slain. This is horrible for a cat-lover to do, just as horrible as it seemed to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita to slay his relatives. But getting rid of selfhood and the sense of 'I', 'mine' and 'me' *is* horrible. Holy obedience may be a better way of getting rid of it than Tenko San's insistence on toilet-cleaning, but the difficulty remains and we need not be surprised when it appears to have more than nine lives.

Endo San, a spiritual healer who used to treat Tenko San, insisted that concentration of thought preparatory to healing must commence with thankfulness for the mere gift of life and all that life brings including pain, in other words holy and grateful obedience. Without this attitude there is an antagonism which prevents the Life Force from flowing freely. This is an aspect of Holy obedience that is obvious but it is not recognized by many.

The reason cannot attain to Him or name Him or know Him..... nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him....He transcends all affirmation as the perfect and unique Cause of all things, and all negation by the pre-eminence of his simple and absolute nature, free from every limitation and beyond them all.

— PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, *The Mystical Theology.*

* * * *

I did not go to the Maggid of Meseritz to learn Torah of him but watch him tie his shoe-laces.

— *Hasidic saying.*

* * * *

There is no writing of mine on this subject, nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study.

— PLATO, *7th Epistle.*

KRISHNA, THE EVERGREEN

By
DILIP KUMAR ROY

The rainbow-lilts of eternal Brindaban
I still recall, I still recall again :
O Prince of loveliness, Light's darling Son,
Touching to radiant joy our nights of pain ! —
I still recall and call to thee again.

Oh, how we ran to the blue Jamuna's brim
To bathe in her crystal waters day by day,
Singing in ecstasy our paeans to Him
Who would outflash His lightning-pranks to play ! —
I still recall and call to thee again.

The carnivals of joy from grove to grove,
When under a star-spangled velvet sky,
The world's Beloved called us to His Ras of love
To savour with Him in an hour eternity ! —
I still recall and call to thee again.

Or the moonlight masques and songs in blissful bowers,
When passion born of His beauty, athrob and tender,
Changed all the thorns of life into blessed flowers
And we won from thee all by our all-surrender.
I still recall and call to thee again.

" Krishna is a fool's fairy tale," they say,
" A legend — His song and dance and revelry."
To them thy Flute of Flame is a myth today
And the drab world's din the last reality !
But I still recall and call to thee again.

How can they know who never have known in love
The bliss the soul feels when thou leanest to bless ?
To the blind can one who has seen his vision prove
Or speak to the heart of stone of thy caress ?
But I still recall and call to thee again.

They scoff and laugh at all I see
And say, " He never came ;
'Tis all a myth — how can it be ?
Krishna is but a name,



An irised bubble, a vapour, sweet
Imagination's gleam :
Could earth and the ethereal meet
Or stars our dust redeem ? "

Still comst as rapture in pain's night,
As beauty flowering
In yearning rocks thy troth to plight,
To Abyss of Heaven to sing.

But I have heard thy Flute of Grace,
Beloved, in my lone heart
And thrilled to the deep blessedness
Of knowing that thou art

My life's one friend and stay and guide,
My cradle and my goal :
And so I smile when they deride
What floods with bliss my soul.

To the one who has Attained : *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*

.....

By
William H. Bates

The Light which lies within us all
Is here for all to see :
Within this frail and changing shell,
We find th' eternal Thee.

Not to be sought by outward aids,
By prayers, nor gifts, nor rites ;
But by the search, intense and real
Into the source of mind.

A search which cannot rest or stay
Until the task is done,
And ego routed from its throne
Where it has reigned too long.

May we, who in this task engage,
Find help in Thy kind smile,
And soon with Thee in peace abide :
Not 'I' ; not 'Thee' ; but ONE.

KRISHNA ON KARMA

By
DILIP KUMAR ROY

(Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra's emissary, comes to the Pandavas who are staying with King Virata and lectures them on the advisability of peace against war, stressing what is expected of spiritual aspirants. He admonishes Yudhishthira that karma (action) is a *maya* and leads one away from the Goal which can only be attained through *jnana* (knowledge). Thereupon Krishna flares up and corrects him).

You hymned inaction as the end of wisdom.
But tell me : would not such a perilous gospel
Lead to a stagnation ? Who would find on earth
The last clue to life's goal through mere inaction ?
Teaches not all experience that action yields
Fruitful harvests which could never accrue
Were we all to sink in deep inaction's slough ?
Some claim, indeed, that man can only arrive
When, shunning all activity, he treads the path
Of knowledge alone. But have you ever met
A man, however wise, whose thirst on earth
Was appeased through the perfect stillness of inaction ?
Nay, my dear friend, and so we find in our world
That even the Illuminates are urged to action.

And then reflect : why have the sages praised
Learning ? Because it leads to a deep fulfilment
Through action and so we laugh at pedantry
That, quoting scriptures, stays ever in its prison
Of shibboleths. Know : only action can
Supply our urgent hungers which must dog
Even the man of knowledge. And so we find
That the highest sages all enjoin right action
Guided by knowledge, and discerning men
Condemn that barren gospel which extols
Pale knowledge divorced from dynamic action.

Friend, read the Book of Life for the lesson it teaches :
Winds spread their message of joy because they blow.
The sun brings day, alternating with night,
Because of sleepless movement. So the moon
And stars and planets bring to bear their deep,
Beneficent influence because of motion.

Could fire ever fulfil its godlike function
Were it to cease to will to glow and shed
Delightful warmth ? Behold : our mother earth
Yields fruits and flowers and corns and sustains life,
Moved by the unflagging energy of her love.
Rivers appease the thirst of sentient creatures,
Transforming arid tracts into fertile fields,
Because they flow on ever pauselessly.
The clouds dissolve in healing, fecund showers
To fulfil their mission of mercy. And lastly, know
Even the high Gods earned the title to reign
In the radiant Heaven because they had first attained
Their envied Godhood through an arduous
Discipline of stupendous aspiration

— *Mahabharata*, Udyoga Parva, Canto 29 P.

A Voyager

By
Harindranath Chatopadhyaya

A weariness hath come into mine oar,
The ruddy day is deepening round my sail ;
Black storm-clouds in my heavens brood no more,
No more the thunder-crack and lashing gale.

My lonely boat is resting on the deep
Laden with one high dream of coming dawn :
Under its keel the waters lie like sleep,
Their restless and dishevelled waves withdrawn.

O Mystery of peace ! no sense of stir,
No foolish haste, nor need for hollow speech ;
All suddenly the anxious voyager
Seems to have reached a shore beyond his reach !

The darkness comes self-kindled, star by star,
Leaving for him nor sense of Near nor Far.

THE MAHARSHI AND THE MAHATMA

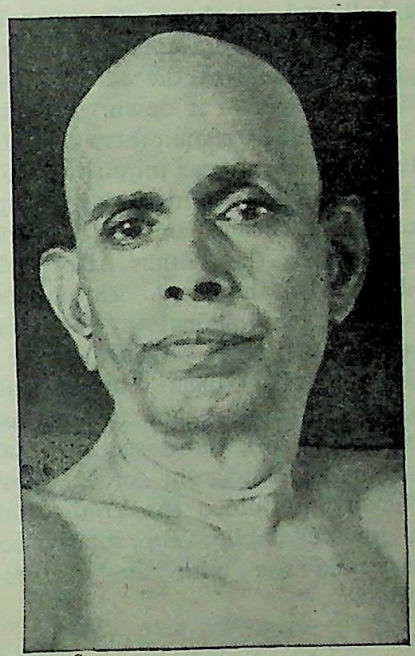
By
K. ARUNACHALAM

THIS happened in the summer of 1932. I was working in those days with a group of young men in the slums of Bangalore under the leadership of Brahmachari Ramachandra. He suggested that I should visit Sri Ramana Maharshi on my way back from Madurai. I had been to my village in Madurai district for a brief visit and I was returning to Bangalore to resume my work in the Gandhi School run by the Deena Seva Sangh. Tiruvannamalai — the abode of the Maharshi is not on my regular route. So I had to go to Villupuram and change trains. Tiruvannamalai is a midway station on the Villupuram-Katpadi line. I got down at the Tiruvannamalai station and went to the famous Arunachaleswarar Temple.

To my surprise I found there a Sanyasi spinning on the charkha in one of the mandapams within the precincts of the temple. I stood in front of him for a considerably long time. Spinning was common in those days. Anyone who was politically conscious spun either with a charkha or with a takli. But for one who has renounced the joys and sorrows of the world in favour of God realization to be spinning was something beyond my comprehension. Further, this sanyasi dressed in khadi gerua cloth was using a pedal-charkha. And that was why I stood in front of him in great amazement. Later on I came to know that this sanyasi was one of the disciples of the Maharshi.

After a while I made enquiry about Ramana Ashram. This institution solely built around the Maharshi was not as famous then as it grew to be in the forties and thereafter. I was shown the way. I walked along the road under the shadow of the hill — Arunachalam.

I reached the Ashram and met the person in charge of arrangements. He showed me



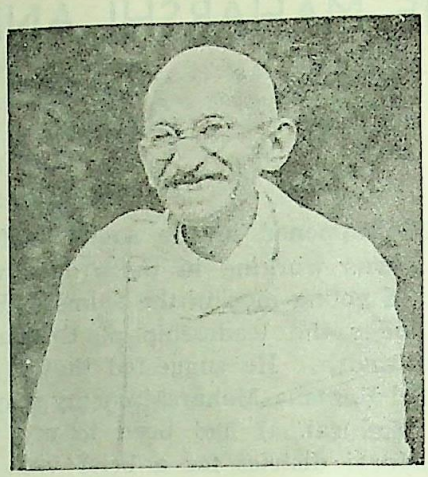
a place where I could keep my things and stay. After the necessary formalities and they were simple enough, I entered the hall in which the Maharshi was seated on a sofa. In another corner of the hall there was a cupboard on top of which I saw an eighteen inch high statue of Mahatma Gandhi (with a khadi yarn garland). I sat in front of the Maharshi along with several others. Some of the devotees were seated in ardha-padmasana in meditation. A few were reading silently some religious literature. The Maharshi himself was in samadhi. Some were reciting slokas in a soft melodious tone. On the whole the atmosphere was an elevating one.

I sat in silence for hours together. When it was time for the night meal all the devotees got up and walked towards the adjoining dining hall. I also went with them. The hall was divided by a cloth curtain. On

the other side of the curtain some of the orthodox devotees sat for their meal. On this side were all the non-orthodox. The Maharshi sat in a place visible to one and all. For he did not differentiate between man and man. This was a great lesson to me. After the meal some of us went back to the hall and sat there. Occasionally the Maharshi would say something which was not quite audible and the scribe sitting by his side would write it down. I decided to sleep in the hall as some others did. I could not sleep because I was inquisitive to know what the Maharshi would do. He got up from the sofa at 3 O'clock in the morning and walked towards the tank. After ablutions he had a dip in the pond. He changed his khadi kaupeenam (loincloth) and washing the used one let it dry outside. After doing all this, he walked back into the hall and sat as usual on the sofa. Sometimes he reclined on the sofa and dosed off. Early in the morning the Maharshi got up, went into the kitchen and joined the group that was cutting up vegetables. He supervised the breakfast and ate with the visitors and ashramites.

During the day time there was a stream of visitors who went near the Maharshi and prostrated before him. Sometimes he opened his eyes and blessed them with a smile. Occasionally he spoke a few words. When the daily newspaper arrived it was placed near him. He glanced through the pages and put it aside. Most of the time his eyes remained half closed. There was a calm peace in the whole environment that surpassed all understanding. I sat silently watching and enjoying the holy presence of the Maharshi. After spending full three days like this, I wanted to take leave of the Maharshi and go to Bangalore. I was waiting for an opportunity.

The Maharshi opened his eyes. I got up and prostrated myself before him and requested him to clear a doubt of mine. He showed his willingness by a broad smile. Taking courage I posed the following problem: "The Maharshi by his example directs his followers to keep quiet, but



Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi whose statue is here, by his own example, goads everyone to be continuously active. I am puzzled as to whom to follow." The Maharshi's face broadened with an unparalleled smile. He asked, "Who told you that I am sitting quiet?" I replied in all humility that I had seen with my own eyes. He said, "Why do you think that what you are seeing with your physical eyes is the truth?" I had no answer for this question.

Once again I repeated the question as to whom to follow? Then he enquired about what I was doing. I gave him an idea of the slum-settlement work in Bangalore and told him how we were intensively engaged in Harijan uplift and prohibition work. He blessed the work and asked me to continue the work in the manner in which Mahatma Gandhi wanted such work done, i.e. with great devotion and detachment. I was given a set of Ashram publications to be used by the workers. I asked the Maharshi for his autograph. He did not agree but he wanted the *Sarvadhikari* who was standing near by to write my name. When I gave him my name without initial, he asked for my father's name. The Maharshi immediately said, "How can Arunachalam have a father?" and he laughed.

I stood in his presence for how long I don't know. When I regained my conscious-

ness I took leave of him and left for Bangalore.

In 1951-52 I was in the U.S.A. In my tour of the Southern States I came into touch with a group of whites who were deeply involved in the desegregation movement. They did not differentiate between man and man, whether black or white. I found in the study of the leader of this group a photo of Sri Ramana Maharshi whom he had never seen. He revealed that it was Maharshi's teaching that was a driving force in all his activities undertaken for bringing about equality between the two races — the Whites and the Negroes. He evinced a deep interest in the Maharshi's mode of self-enquiry for self-realization. Now I understood the true import of the Gita Teaching: "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men; he is a yogi, who has accomplished all action."

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

90. When one quests inward for the Knower,
The knowing ego and the knowledge gained
Are both erased and one abides
As pure being.
One who has an ego still
Because he has not seen the Self,
How can he be called an adept?

91. Learning to forget completely
All knowledge gained of objects,
Turn firmly inward and behold
Clearly the truth and stay serene.
Those who recollect forgotten things
Pine bewildered, fretting over
False phenomena.

92. Poor fellow, proud of your omniscience,
When questioned, "you who know all things,
Do you know who *You* are?"
You tremble and collapse discomfited.
Let this your ego-mind,
O man of genius,
Turn to dust and perish utterly.

93. He who, his ego gone, knows through and through
"I", the First Person, subject substantive,
Combined with "AM", the predicate of being,
He indeed and he alone is the true knower.

94. Books of guidance all prescribe
Freedom from thought as the best way
To final freedom. This being known,
The heart of every art, of what avail
Are all the arts?

95. The burden of the arts upborne
By folk who dally in fleeting flesh
Fails to bring grace, tire out the ego
Or draw one inward to the Heart.
What better purpose does it serve
Than the goat's ever-restless beard?

96. Unless by one means or another
Mind dies out and certitude
From true self-recognition comes,
The knowledge which mere learning brings
Is no more real than a horse's horn.

RENOUNCE AND ENJOY

By
Prof. EKNATH EASWARAN

"CAN you give me the secret of your life in three words?", a distinguished American journalist is said to have asked Mahatma Gandhi.

"Yes," came the smiling reply. "Renounce and enjoy!"

Gandhiji was quoting from the Isha Upanishad which gives us in three Sanskrit words, *tena tyaktena bhunjeetha*, the supreme secret of how to live in abiding joy and unshaken security. The same answer was given by Sri Ramakrishna when he was asked by his disciple to sum up the central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. "Try repeating *gita, gita, gita* over and over again and it becomes *tagi, tagi, tagi*". Tagi is a form of the Sanskrit word *tyagi*, which is derived from the root *tyaj* meaning to renounce.

The English word *renounce* has a cold, callous sound about it, and it is not very surprising if most of us tend to look with suspicion upon anyone who counsels us to renounce. We immediately jump to the conclusion that these great mystics who advocate renunciation are asking us to renounce life, comfort and culture, love and light. This is entirely due to a misunderstanding of the mystic's message. We are so enmeshed in selfish attachments that we have lost the right perspective towards life.

Jesus tells us in words that cannot be misunderstood, *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.* (Luke 17:33). Living on the ego level as a feverish little fragment is, to Jesus, losing one's life: and going beyond all fragmentation to reach at-one-ment is, to Jesus, preserving one's life. In the first case we are clinging to appearance; in the second, we are established in Reality. It is the shadow we renounce to enjoy the substance. The Isha Upanishad points out, *In the heart of all things, of whatsoever there is in the universe, dwells the Lord. He alone is the Reality. Wherefore, renouncing vain appearances, rejoice in Him.* It is appearance we renounce for the sake of attaining Reality.

None of us see life as it is, the world as it is. We all see life as we are. I am looking at others through my own likes and dislikes, prejudices and prepossessions, desires and interests. It is this separatist outlook that fragments life for us — man against man, community against community, country against country. If only we could throw away this fragmenting instrument of observation called the ego, the great mystics assure us, on the strength of their own experience, we shall see all life as an indivisible whole.

Clinging to our I-ness and my-ness prevents us from revealing our true state. The word *personality*, as we know, comes from the Latin *persona* meaning a mask, and all that we have to do in life to find abiding joy and unshakable security is to throw away this ego mask called *ahankara* in Sanskrit.

Sri Ramakrishna was fond of relating the story of the man who was hugging a thorny cactus with all his might, bleeding profusely and crying out in agony, "Help me. Help me."

"Stop hugging the cactus." Sri Ramakrishna would advise him, "and you are free."

It is all very easy to say, "Stop hugging the cactus," but how is it possible for us to do it when we are conditioned on the material, physical, mental and intellectual levels to believe that the cactus is our most precious possession? This is the hypnotic

spell called *maya* in Sanskrit, and the *fall* in the Judeo-Christian tradition. As declared in the Svetasvatara Upanishad,

> Thou, Brahman Immortal,
> And thou, woven of clay
> (Two beings, yet one) —
> Like two beautiful birds,
> Golden of plumage,
> Companions inseparable,
> Perched high upon the branches
> Of the selfsame tree —
> As man thou tastest
> The sweet fruits of the tree,
> The sweet and bitter fruits;
> But as Brahman, master of Maya,
> Thou remainest unseen,
> Immobile,
> Calmly observing.
> Forgetting his oneness with Thee
> Bewildered by his weakness,
> Full of sorrow is man;
> But let him look close on thee
> Know thee as himself,
> O Lord, most worshipful,
> And behold thy glory —
> Lo, all his heavy sorrow
> Is turned to joy.

In other words, it is only by renouncing our ego that we can live life at its richest and fullest. This renunciation can be learned slowly and skilfully on all levels, drawing upon the spiritual power released every day through the practice of meditation. Meditation clears the eyes and strengthens the will to discover the indivisible unity of life and live in complete harmony with it. It is one thing to repeat like a parrot, "All life is one, all life is one," and it is an entirely different thing to perceive it and practise it in daily living. This is beyond the capacity of our normal modes of knowing, but through meditation we can slowly but surely bring about the total unification of consciousness. When we are united within we are able to see everywhere the indivisible unity that is the Divine Ground of existence.

Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus the Christ taught us that the Kingdom of Heaven lies within — that the source of all joy, of all security, of all fulfilment is ever-present in the depths of our consciousness. Forgetful of this timeless truth given to us by Jesus we have let ourselves be hypnotised by sales slogans of the anonymous advertising copywriters whom the late Aldous Huxley called the apostles of modern civilization. They keep on dinning into our ears through television and radio, newspapers and billboards, that the Kingdom of Heaven lies outside us:

> "Get more funds out of life."
> "Happiness is a split-level home."
> "One taste and you are ours for keeps."
> "A diamond is forever."
> "Life at sea is like nothing on earth."

Thus we become dependent on things for our security and status, and every dependency brings with it an element of anxiety and apprehension of losing it. Our cars, homes and clothes may come to own us if we depend upon them for status and security. Without a certain amount of detachment it is not possible to use material possessions wisely. Many people who would otherwise walk have become lethargic and use their cars to go to the corner drugstore or the mailbox, thus depriving their bodies of exercise necessary for maintaining good health. Commuters travelling at a mile a minute, morning and evening, do not realize for a long period the toll that speed is taking on our nervous systems. Holiday crowds helplessly driven by high-powered cars cause more deaths on the freeways than are caused on the battle field. The automobile, which is a valuable servant of mankind when used wisely, has become a violent master.

Our body, too, is a compact car, delicate and complex, which needs to be treated with great respect and intelligence so that it will give us long and loving service, not only in the prime of life but even in what are called the declining years. As a young man walking with Mahatma Gandhi, then in his seventies, I had a hard time keeping pace with him. He has said that his capacity for work was three times as much at this stage as in the days of his youth before he had learned to treat his body with great respect and intelligence. The pressure of constant and colossal responsibility did not prevent

him from falling asleep like a baby repeating the Holy Name of Rama. He showed respect for his body by giving it only nourishing and necessary diet, regular exercise in the form of walking and early bedtime. He always chose what was beneficial to his body rather than what was pleasing to his palate.

Just as the body is our external instrument which has to be treated with great respect and intelligence for efficient use, similarly the mind is our internal instrument which calls for even more tender and skilful care because it is much more powerful and much less tangible. It, too, receives food through the eyes and ears in the form of literature, art, music and the spoken word. Even those who are so careful about ensuring the proper supply of proteins and vitamins in the diet, and pasteurizing milk, often fail to take elementary precautions against the consumption of poisonous mental food. We are told by a prominent educationist that much of the violence we witness around us today can be directly traced to twenty thousand hours of TV violence to which most young people have been exposed in the last twenty years. If only these twenty thousand hours had been utilized for bringing home the truth that violence is the negation of the indivisible unity of life and of individual fulfilment, they would today be making a rich and lasting contribution to their family, country and the world.

Furthermore, we need to detach ourselves from our opinion even to evaluate them and present them effectively. If our opinions cannot stand the impartial scrutiny of others, it is good for us to reconsider them. Too often our 'convictions' are the rationalization of childhood associations which do not permit us to see the situations clearly or act maturely because of intense emotional involvement. If we can detach ourselves in good measure from our pet opinions, we shall be able to bridge the widening communication gap between parents and children, husband and wife, employer and employee, community and community, nation and nation.

What the Isha Upanishad asks us to renounce is our self-will, our separateness, our my-ness, which is the cause of all our suffering. The Buddha calls it *tana*, the fierce thirst of the ego.

> Whomsoever this fierce poisonous thirst overcomes in the world his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass. But from him who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off, like water-drops from a lotus leaf.

Too often commentators have misplaced the emphasis on *renounce* rather than on *enjoy*. Renunciation opens the door to Perfect Joy. Listen to the song of the Taittiriya Upanishad, *Who could live, who could breathe, if that blissful Self dwelt not within the lotus of the heart? He it is that gives joy.*

The Self is all. Are you apart from the Self? Or can the work go on without the Self? The Self is universal: so, all actions will go on whether you strain yourself to be engaged in them or not. The work will go on of itself. Thus Krishna told Arjuna that he need not trouble to kill the Kouravas; they were already slain by God. It was not for him to resolve to work and worry himself about it, but to allow his own nature to carry out the will of the Higher Power.

— SRI MAHARSHI

THE GREAT EVENT

By
R. NARAYANA IYER [1]

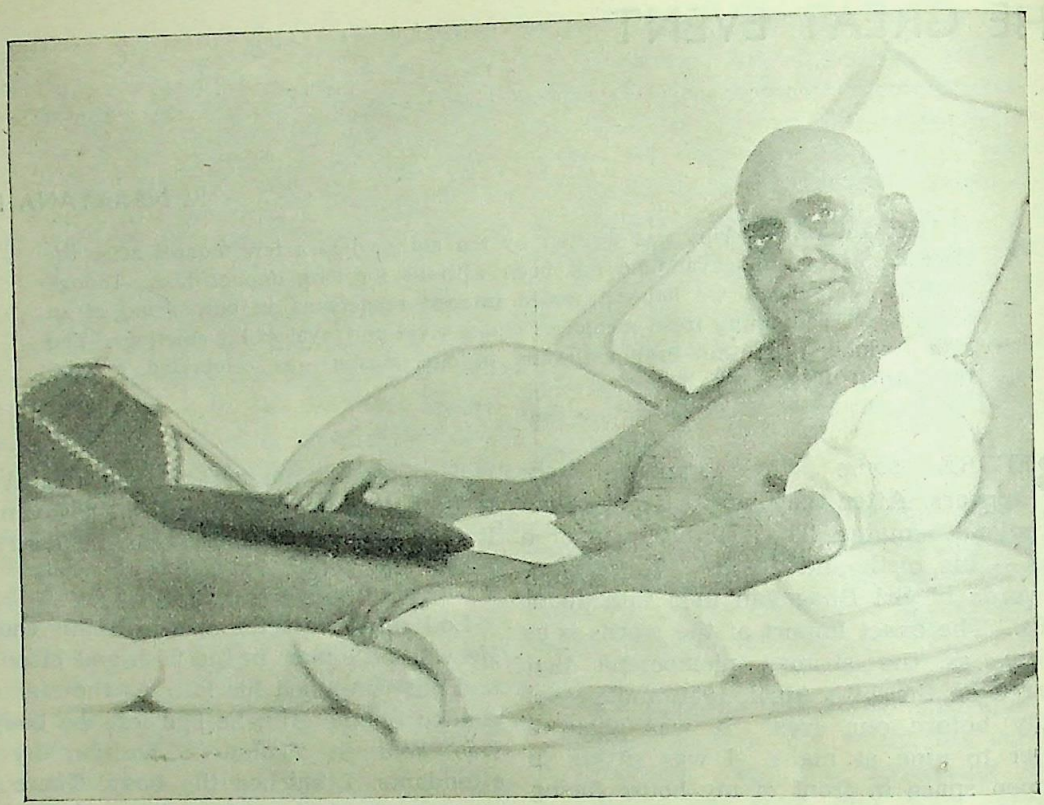
The following script was written by the author just a few months after the Nirvana of Sri Bhagavan and has been with us for long unpublished. Though written years back, we hope it would interest readers as an outpouring of an old devotee containing fresh memories and a vivid portrayal of his emotions. The 19th Aradhana of the Brahmanirvana of our Master was celebrated on the 14th April 1969.

"BEFORE some stars appear, light appears. After they vanish from vision light alone remains. That is the state of a jnani — his birth and death." These were the words of Sri Bhagavan in a talk about Jnanis. The exact import of the words is as puzzling as the strange phenomena that occurred on the 14th April, 1950 and passed vividly before our eyes. It was about a quarter to nine at night. I was sitting in the open space in front of my house facing east. The sky was clear, the air still. A grave and subdued solemnity pervaded the atmosphere as though reflecting the anxiety of so many sincere devotees of the Maharshi who had come to Tiruvannamalai on account of his illness.

Suddenly a bright and luminous body arose from the southern horizon, slowly went up and descended in the north somewhere on Arunachala Hill. It was not a meteor as it was bigger than what Venus looks to our vision, and its movement was slow. It was so lustrous that as it was at the zenith the light shed by its trail stretched as far as the horizon like an arc. The sight dazed me. Instinctively as it were I jumped to my feet and ran as fast as I could to the Ashram a hundred yards off. There was a crowd of people moving about and quite a hustle and bustle. It didn't strike me to enquire of anyone what it was about. Access to the Maharshi was naturally then select and restricted to a few. I cared not for the Ashram rules and regulations, but like a tethered calf let loose and running to its mother, I took a short cut, jumped into the garden, scaled the parapet and rushed into the room where the Maharshi, Bhagavan, my Ramana, Guru, Father, God in flesh and blood was lying.

Lo! My heart thumped. Breath choked. He was no longer in the flesh and blood. He had just breathed his last. As the star descended on the Hill, he had left the body. It was held in Padmasan position by the attendants. I touched the body. There was no warmth. I clasped in frenzied hold the hand, the mere touch of which used to give the thrill of eternity. Coldness of death frenzied my nerves. All was over like a dream. Sobs and hymns and chantings filled the air, and my head reeled with dizzy thoughts. We will no longer see our dear Bhagavan in that beautiful form of molten gold, in which he charmed and enchanted us for decades! We will no longer see those compassionate eyes that gleamed like twin stars and peered into our innermost depths and dispelled the shadows that blurred our vision and understanding! No more that kind and godly look of Grace that solaced our wearied souls and inspired our depressed hearts in speechless silence with peace unbounded, or that bewitching and enchanting radiant smile that fascinated us and drew us to him to heights of bliss, far far above this world. No more could we hear that sweet and ringing voice, the talks of sparkling wit and humour, or those words of profound wisdom from the depths of deep realization which intellect could not

[1] Introduced to our readers in *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1968 issue, p. 83.



Ten days before the "Great Event".

fathom! Tears gushed forth from my eyes as from a fountain. 'Roll! Roll! You beads of Love, from the fountain of Love to the Ocean of Love!" It is not fruit and flowers, nor sweets and savoury dishes that can be offered at Thy feet any more. The only oblation that would reach Thee are tears of love from that perennial spring that is the core of our Being of which you are the source in your disembodied fullness. The Divine Leela is over.

So His Leela (play) was really over on that momentous fourteenth day of April, 1950. No one was kept in doubt or suspense or taken by surprise. It was a prolonged ailment, and abundant opportunity was afforded to one and all from far and near to come and see him. It was one of the worst maladies that could afflict the human frame, and the way he bore it was an object lesson to all. Not once did his face reveal agony or suffering, but he carried on the normal routine with his majestic smile of supreme bliss in his face, and the mirthful repartees and sallies of wit. It was also plain that he used no mysterious yogic or super-human powers to alleviate or conquer pain as the following remark he made about the disease would show: "Appah! Who could conceive that such a disease as this, could be in this world? When a hiccough comes the whole body splits like the flashes of lightning in a cloud!" This remark was made by him in such a cool and composed way as though it was not his body that was suffering.

We must go out of ourselves entirely to God, for it is better to belong to Him than to ourselves, and thus God can give Himself to those who abandon themselves to Him.

— Pseudo-Dionysius, '*The Divine Names*'

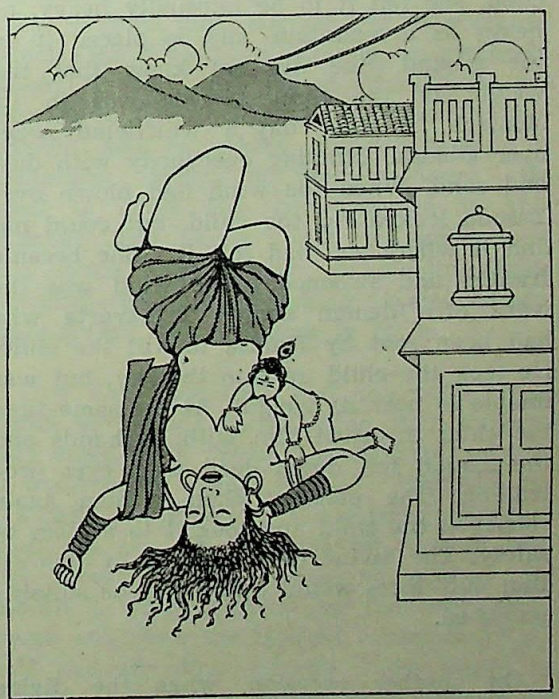
SYMBOLISM IN THE LIFE OF SRI KRISHNA–2

By
Dr. W. RADHAKRISHNAYYA

(The first part in this series was published in our July 1968 issue)

NEXT day Kamsa convened a meeting of the council of his ministers and reported to them what Maya had told him, namely that his enemy had escaped their vigilance. The ministers thereupon undertook to destroy without any discrimination brahmins, sages, Vedas, sacrifices and cows and stop the practice of truthfulness, austerities, control of the senses and the mind, sincerity, kindness, etc., since these formed the body of the Supreme Being. They thought that if these were destroyed the Supreme Being would be destroyed. Little did they know that by this decision they were inviting their own downfall.

Now at the Gokula all the festivities connected with the birth of the child had ended. Nanda, therefore, went to Mathura to pay the annual taxes due to Kamsa. At this time Pootana, a demoness and agent of Kamsa, was visiting village after village and killing all new-born children, hoping that among these might be the would-be-destroyer of Kamsa. Assuming the form of a beautiful woman she entered the house of Nanda and, without so much as a formal request to anybody, took the divine child upon her lap and gave it her breast which had been smeared with poison. The child understood at a glance her vile intentions and in an instant sucked out not only the poisoned milk but also her very life. The demoness fell down dead, stretching herself out in her real form which was almost as long as a street. Yasoda and Rohini who were looking on helplessly all the time now took the child away from that body and performed some propitiatory rites over it. The inhabitants of the Gokula were unable to remove the huge body and so cut it up into pieces and cremated them at a distance from the village. A very pleasant odour emanated from the pyre. This was because the body had been purified by the touch of the divine child. Although her intentions were vile she had acted as a mother to the Lord. Therefore she attained liberation. For the Lord had declared that he would give shelter to all beings, especially those who surrender themselves to him, saying, 'I am yours'. Kamsa symbolises the rajasic ego, his ministers the old record of vasanas, culminating in their evil advice. Pootana means purified body. The body of the demoness was pure though her mind had been poisoned by Kamsa. Her body became purified by the touch of the divine child.



. . . sucked out not only the poisoned milk but also her life.

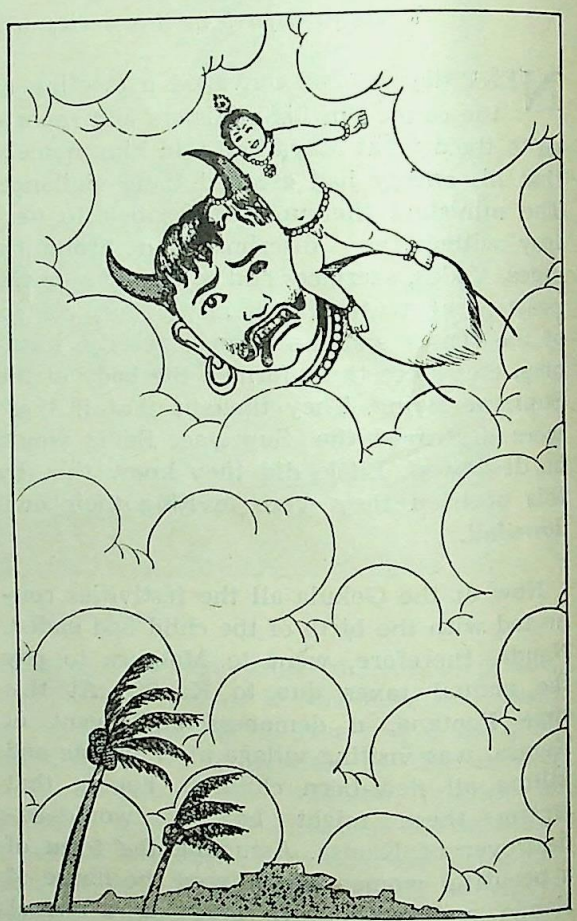
The Pootana incident occurred when Nanda was away from the Gokula. Nanda returned and there was joy everywhere. To slip

from the seat of *ananda* (joy) is samsara or pain.

In a few months the divine child began to crawl. Yasoda's joy knew no bounds. She arranged for a feast to celebrate the event. In the midst of the festivities the child, felt hungry and kicked out his legs and thereby struck a cart laden with milk, curds, butter and many other things, which was standing nearby. The cart flew up into the air and then came down with a crash. At this Yasoda ran up and took the child to a safe place. She performed more acts of propitiation. Young children who were playing about told the elders that the cart had flown up kicked by the child, but they would not believe. This shows that the Supreme is not conditioned by limitations. It is omnipotent and capable of doing things which the mind cannot easily comprehend.

One day, as Yasoda was suckling the child, she felt it to be unusually heavy, as heavy as a mountain, and so placed it on the ground. She did not know that the weight of the three worlds was in its stomach. Another day a whirlwind swept over Gokula, blinding everybody with dust and sand. When the wind had blown over Yasoda looked for the child, but could not find it where she had left it. She became frantic, and swooned. The wind was the work of a demon named Trinavarta who had been sent by Kamsa to kill the child. He took the child up into the sky, but was unable to bear its weight. At the same time the child throttled him with its hands and the demon fell down dead with eyes protruding. The panic-stricken women again retrieved the child and took it to a place of safety. The divine child showed by this act that evil-doers would eventually be suitably punished.

On another occasion, when the divine child was sitting on Yasoda's lap, it yawned, and then Yasoda saw in its little mouth the sky, the stars, the sun, the moon, the mountains, forests, rivers, seas and islands with living beings. She was naturally amazed. The vision, however, was momentary and soon she forgot all about it. The Lord was giving her a vision of the universe the weight of which she had experienced earlier. The world is Brahman. Having come out of Brahman it is no other than Brahman.



The child throttled him with its hands.

When the time for giving names to the children arrived, Garga, the family priest of the Yadavas, arrived at the Gokula. He had been specially sent by Vasudeva for giving names to them. Rohini's son was named Balarama because of his immense physical strength (*bala*) and because he was very pleasing to the people (*rama*). He also came to be known as Sankarshana because he had been transferred from the womb of Devaki to that of Rohini. Yasoda's son was named Krishna as he was of a bluish complexion, the colour of a dark rain-cloud. He was also known as Vāsudeva because he was the

son of Vasudeva. Garga divulged the secret of the two children, namely that Krishna was really the Supreme Being and Balarama the symbol of the *sattvic ahamkar* (ego). The immense strength of the latter was not exhibited fully except occasionally. He was always in the background. The ego is powerless when the Self is shining as in the case of Krishna. Here it is not merely the physical strength that is implied. It is that inner strength through which physical strength becomes manifest. The sattvic ego is both sweet (*rama*) and powerful (*bala*). A great man once said that it has the strength of four men because, when a man dies, it requires four or more men to carry him to the burning ground, while alive it can carry the entire weight by itself.

Krishna's complexion is blue like the blue of the endless sky or the boundless ocean. The infinite is described as blue, because it cannot be fathomed by the senses and the mind. Krishna's complexion is thus symbolic of the Infinite. He is sometimes described as 'the blue boy of Brindavan'. The word Krishna comes from the root 'krish' which means to steal, and so Krishna may be called a thief. The Supreme Being is sometimes described in the Vedas as '*taskaranam pati*' or the chief of thieves. A thief, while stealing, sees others but takes care that others do not see him. A thief may sometimes get caught, but the chief never. Krishna is famous for his boyish thefts. He is described as the butter-thief (*makkan chor*). He is also described as the stealer of the hearts of the Gopis, the simple women of Gokula (*Gopi chitta chor*). Butter is the mass of *vasanas* (latent impressions) collected by the Gopis every day. It is white, pure, soft, sweet and oily. It cannot be easily separated from the milk. It represents the hearts of the devotees where all the vasanas are stored. Every day Krishna steals this butter and makes the devotees free from *vasanas* and thus leads them to liberation or *mukti*. He steals from them against their will and this is symbolised by the breaking of the pots in which the butter is kept or emptying them. This is nothing but His grace. He does this only for the sake of his devotees. He steals the *vasanas* or sins and so destroys their chain of birth and death.

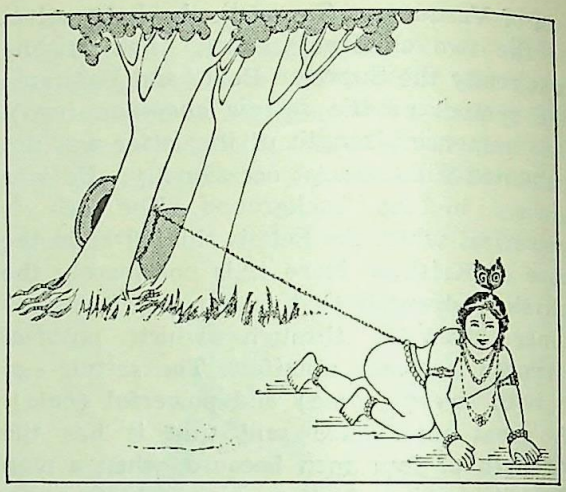
Vāsudsva means more than the son of Vasudeva. The three worlds of waking, dreaming and deep sleep are permeated by His fragrance (*vasana*). He is the indweller of everything. Without His fragrance the three worlds of experience cannot become manifest. The fragrance is that of the Infinite.

Krishna and Balarama soon began to walk about. They were the attraction of the entire Gokula and were loved by everybody. They used to play with the calves, letting them loose out of milking-time and watching them with joy to the discomfiture of the elders. They and their friends would enter the houses in the Gokula in the absence of the inmates, steal the butter kept high up in pots and break the pots if they were not easy to reach. When the women tried to catch them they eluded them easily. When they went to Yasoda to complain about Krishna they found him sitting on her lap as if nothing had happened and the women had to return without making a complaint, unsure of their evidence. He used to show His omnipresence in this manner. The Gopis could not understand His grace in the form of stealing their accumulations and making them empty, thus giving Him a chance to fill in.

One day Balarama and the other boys came to Yasoda complaining that Krishna had eaten mud. When Yasoda asked him if it was true he calmly replied: 'Mother, am I a child to eat mud? These boys are lying. You can see for yourself by looking into my mouth." Saying this he opened his mouth in which Yasoda saw the entire universe and even the Gokula containing herself and all other persons. She began to wonder, "Is this a dream or a delusion of my mind or is it the divine maya?" She then mentally surrendered herself to the Supreme Being admitting her inability to understand the vision. Thereupon Krishna caused her to forget completely everything

she had seen. He pitied her for looking upon Him as her child. Even the Vedas and the Upanishads are not able to say definitely who He is.

One day, while Krishna was suckling, Yasoda had to suddenly leave him and run up to remove the milk-pot from the stove as the milk was boiling over. At this Krishna got angry. He took a churning stick and broke with it the pot of curds that stood nearby and then went to take the butter kept in another pot. When Yasoda returned and saw all the mischief she wanted to punish him by tying him with a rope. One rope was just an inch short to go round his body. She tied it to another, but that was also as much too short. All the ropes she brought were all together too short to go round his body. At last Krishna took pity upon her and allowed himself to be bound. Yasoda tied him to a large wooden mortar and left him. But he slowly dragged the mortar into the garden and got it entangled between two tall trees which stood close to each other. He pulled and the trees fell down. From the fallen trees emerged two



celestial beings who had been cursed by the sage Narada to become trees on account of their unashamed conduct in his presence and had now regained their old forms by coming into contact with Krishna. It was foolish of Yasoda to think of catching Him who is formless and binding Him who is boundless. Even the sages have rarely succeeded in perceiving Him in their hearts.

(To be continued)

Path to Flame Celestial

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By

Prof. K. R. R. Sastry

THE Maharshi was never tired of stressing the direct steep mode of Self-Realization.

"Brahman is shining lustrously in the middle of the cave of the Heart in the shape of the Self always proclaiming 'I Am', 'I Am'. Become an *Atmanishta*, a Self-realized person, either by making the mind absorbed in the search of the Self or by making the mind drown itself through control of the breath."

It may be asked if this can help all. It has been answered in all religions that there are many paths: "All paths are Thine".

The old, orthodox Hindu pilgrim still ascends the Seven Hills at Tirupathi by the roughest track. Others drive straight to the front of Lord Venkateswara's shrine.

The ultimate end is the same. The track lit by the Maharshi after his experience of death of the body is a unique one. It can be followed by people of all religions.

The thousands who came to the Maharshi to resolve their doubts, difficulties and almost despair, he would tell to look into their own selves, the true Self, and so *be* themselves. To the Maharshi there is *no becoming*, it is only a removal of the many curtains hiding the Flame Celestial, the Real Self.

MORE THAN A DREAM?

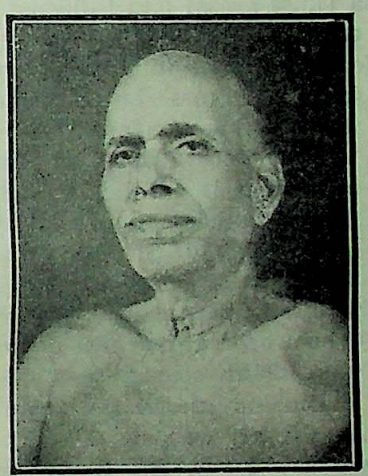
By
T. P. R.[1]

IS there any significance in a dream or is it a mere phenomenon ? was the question I addressed to Sri Bhagavan in writing, in my earlier days. In those times the subjects of 'guru and sishya', of 'initiation and diksha' were the foremost topics of general discussion. Does Sri Bhagavan give diksha to us and if not, why not ? In earlier days the presence of Sri Bhagavan was sought above all by people who desired liberation. Our ambitious aspirations saw no bounds in the grace of his presence. My intense feeling was, that whether there was significance or not in all these dikshas and initiations, if Sri Bhagavan was to do it, it would be a blessing for me in any case. His pithy utterances then were very cryptic and yet have ever been pregnant with meaning, and power. "Who is the Guru ? Who is the sishya ? Who is to give and to whom ? What is there to give ? You think the 'Self' to be the body and take yet another body for the 'Guru' and demand of the one to bless the other. Is the 'Guru' regarding the body as the 'Self' ? There is neither Guru nor disciple other than the 'Self'. Guru is Self."

Though convinced by his presence and utterances, there yet remained a lurking sense of something missing and unfulfilled. It was at that time that I had an extraordinary experience which left an impress on my whole being. It was neither a dream nor a waking state when this happened. I was perfectly alive to it and aware of the permeation which was consuming and overpowering me. I described the following immediately in my note-book and later went to the Ashram. Reaching Sri Bhagavan's presence before dusk I left my note-book with him for his perusal. This was the record :—

"18*th November*, 1936, 3-00 *a.m.*"

It was an apparent dream. I was in a huge quadrangle of some college buildings. I was studying and suddenly I saw Sri Bhagavan had come down, youthful and vigorous in appearance, and had the impression that he was going to manifest himself and speak. Oh it was a wonderful sight, thousands of people gathered round at a



distance encircling Bhagavan and perched on all walls, upper floors and any available space around. I saw Dandapani sitting at a distance echoing Sri Bhagavan's speech which was in turn echoed by another. It had never occurred to me that this would happen or that Sri Bhagavan would ever come here and I who was at a distance could not stand the separation. I darted forward to Sri Bhagavan and embraced him with so firm a grip the like of which I have not the strength to do or achieve in physical consciousness. And Sri Bhagavan embraced me. In each others' embrace, we left the place. At once I found him in my house. I saw my mother more robust than she ever was in life, first welcoming Sri Bhagavan,

[1] Introduced to our readers in the issue of July, 1966, p. 299.

my father calm and unperturbed as he always was in physical life and my sister the same. Sri Bhagavan had a cold bath, myself pouring pots and pots of water over him. Then in a few moments he went up and down our house throwing us all in confusion, but I alone followed him without a second thought. My mother would by this time appear to be losing her confidence and faith. In the midst of this embarrassment and in her presence, Sri Bhagavan appeared to put me to the test as it were, and asked me, pointing to my sacred thread and other things: 'What is all this! Now I say, throw, throw them away and *I shall give you this*' — He was holding in his hands a bunch of darba (kusa grass) and I did not perceive how it came into his hands. At first I hesitated for a moment to discard my sacred thread for 'kusa grass' but a moment's reflection made me surrender to his will and with all vehemence I tore off the sacred thread and flung it on the ground, to the dismay of my mother and perplexity of my father. Immediately Sri Bhagavan gave me two handfuls of kusa grass in 'horse-shoe' shape, and the moment I touched and received them *a great serenity pervaded my entire being.*[2] With courage and determination I looked up at Sri Bhagavan to ask him what all this was about? There was no answer but I saw Sri Bhagavan's form change into the shape of Sri Rama or Hanuman and tell me something that I could not catch. So I asked, 'who are you?' and the reply was 'I am Sri Rama, Sri Rama,' whereupon this vision disappeared and I saw Sri Bhagavan in its place. My mother began to cry aloud having lost her balance of mind by this time, and said: 'I will die, I will die, thinking I fell a prey to Sri Bhagavan's lures'. The mention of death caused irrepressible laughter in me and Sri Bhagavan said at once: 'Yes, die; you should die.' When Sri Bhagavan said so, I turned round to my mother and with ferocity cried out, 'Yes, die, die.' She was rolling on the ground when Sri Bhagavan asked me: 'What is the earliest train to Bombay and the cheapest route?' He said he had to go there and to one or two more places and then go on a tour in the north. I was thinking how best to take Sri Bhagavan and go with him, when I felt completely awake and began to reflect on the event. Is there any significance or is it merely a phenomenon of Dream?"

The following morning as usual I entered the Hall. Sri Bhagavan's welcome nod and penetrating look overwhelmed me, and even as I was half doing my obeisance he turned to the shelf beside him, took out the note-book and handed it to me. Immediately he began, 'Don't you know what Madhavan did? One day he was massaging my limbs. Leaving him to his job I reclined, closing my eyes. After some time I felt some variation in the friction, so I opened my eyes and saw him with head bent down clutching my feet in his hands. What are you doing? Nothing, nothing, he replied, resuming his task. He took it as diksha by the feet.' Immediately I said that I had had an unusual experience by Sri Bhagavan's touch, which stirred my being though in a dreamy condition and asked if initiation or diksha could be had this way also and whether these were real and effective regardless of the swapna state? Sri Bhagavan slowly spoke with short intervals of silent gaze: 'Jagrat and swapna are states that come and go. If these states are real they must be unchanging, permanent.'

'Our real nature is constant being. It never changes. Be it 'upadesa' or 'diksha' the efficacy of the guru's influence or God's grace is not conditioned by the different states. The influence is an experience of being itself. Guru, God and Self are one and the same. So long as the Guru, God or the Self are deemed external, all upadesa, initiation and several dikshas mentioned have a relative meaning and significance. But 'Guru' is external and internal, and is the very 'Self'. Such influence is efficacious whether the experience is in the jagrat or swapna.'

[2] I experienced a descent of dynamic force into my being, flowing as it were from and through the sahasrara permeating downwards and downwards slowly to the heart-centre, and reaching the same, at which moment I felt apprehensive that my physical frame could not stand this permeation and impact any more, without jeopardy.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL IMPERATIVES CONCERNING ACTION IN THE GITA

By
Dr. P. NAGARAJA RAO

THE Bhagavad Gita is one of the great scriptures of the world and is translated into many Indian and European languages. It is one of the three source books for all the schools of Vedanta Philosophy. All the ancient acharyas, Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa and others, have commented on it. Many contemporary Indian savants have been inspired by this scripture. The Gita is a "little shrine" in that vast temple the Mahabharata,[1] the great epic which depicts the theatre of the world. The valiant warrior Arjuna, convinced of the righteousness of his cause, as a last resort, gets ready for a war with his wicked cousins. He goes to the battle, in a chariot driven by his friend Krishna. On the battle field, he is overcome by sentimental pity and a strong reluctance to fight, so he refuses to do so. The Lord delivers the message of the Gita to him, to make him understand the righteousness of his cause, drives away his ignorance and despondency and makes him fight.

The message of the Gita is universal and not merely for Arjuna on the battle field. Arjuna is "the representative man, close friend and chosen instrument" of the Lord. It is a book teaching in a world of science and reason the art of spiritual life. It is universal in its scope, catholic in its outlook, and precise in its message ; a layman's scripture. It is a book of exoteric and esoteric religion answering to the needs of all at their own level. The Gita does not expect the impossible from us. Its teaching is psychological and feasible as a way of life, making allowances for our human shortcomings and emotions. The Gita gives us the assurance of our freedom and possibility to rise above circumstances if we use our will and of the magnificent aid the Lord gives us in the form of His Grace. With these two factors, we are asked to battle with cruelty, injustice, mean motives and humiliating weaknesses.

Acharya Vinobha Bhave puts it in a verse :

"Brahma satyam jagat spurti jivanam satya sadhanam"

"Brahman is real, the world is a manifestation. Life is an experiment with truth." We are asked not to compromise with evil, nor give it quarter, or take flight from it, but face it in the spirit of a soldier-saint. The fundamental imperative of the Gita is : "Yield not to this unmanliness, O Arjuna, for it does not become thee. Cast off this faint-heartedness."[2] This imperative is the most important one among the sixty commands in the Gita which the Lord gives his disciples, not as a dictator but as an omniscient benefactor interested in setting right faltering humanity. The first injunction is a strong rebuke for all of us who falter out of weakness trying to excuse the neglect of our duty by pseudo detachment and feigned arguments in favour of inaction.

One has to fight to the utmost for the right cause, with a pure motive, in a right manner and hold firm to righteousness. In the hour of crisis, one must not sit with folded hands, and masquerade one's weakness and sentimentality as piety and love of peace. We must face the crisis in our life not by avoiding its issues or adopting another way of life. We must encounter evil without doing violence to our nature and yet transform life. The Gita insists on our giving battle to evil from where we are. Arjuna is the man who is deeply confused by his sentimental emotions. To him the Lord imparts clarity and light in the hour of darkness. The Gita's stress on *svadharma* is unequivocal in its appreciation and in the denunciation of those who go against their nature and adopt other's dharma (*para dharma*).

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1 *Parva* VI, Ch. 25 to 42.
2 *Ch.* II, 3.

The first imperative is dedicated to strengthening man from within and in bringing clarity, vigour and understanding to confused minds. The late Lokamanya Tilak saw in this the essence of the Gita. All subsequent argumentation in the Gita proves it. In the eleventh chapter again Krishna exhorts Arjuna : " Therefore arise and gain glory, conquering the foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom."[3] Again he exhorts : " Fight delivered from this fever (*yudhyasva vigata jvarah*).[4] The author of the Gita asks us not to become victims of our weakness, doubts, indecisions and cowardice. Krishna's imperative has a tremendous redeeming power. The precise command of the Lord asks us to banish 'weakness'. Swami Vivekananda exclaimed : " Know that all sins and all evils can be summed up in that one word *weakness*." It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil-doing.

Religion is a force and a power, not mere form. It helps man in his effort to fight his lower tendencies (*vasanas*) and bring to the fore his potential goodness. The author of the Gita asks us to live an active moral life. There is no " freedom from action ", but there is only " freedom in action ". Action done in a spirit of dedication to the Lord, without desire for its fruit, according to the behests of the scriptures, can liberate us. If we feel that the task of controlling the senses and following the path of *jnana* (knowledge) is too difficult we are counselled to practise the art slowly step by step. It is not impossible. Where there is a will there is a way. We are asked to emulate the mystics of the past. The author of the Gita asks us to live in the presence of God and dedicate all our activities to Him.

In the twelfth chapter Krishna admits the difficulties men experience in their *sadhana*. He says : " If a man is unable to restrain the mind and fix it on the Self alone, let him try to attain it gradually through practice ; if that too is impossible, let him perform action in the spirit of service to the Lord ; if that too is impossible then "'Surrender to me " is the path. That is the final compassionate message of the Gita. It is its crowning word and the *charama* (last) sloka, e.g. " Abandoning all duties, come unto me alone for shelter. Be not grieved, for I shall release thee from all evils."[5] This assurance is repeated in no uncertain terms. We have consciously to make ourselves a pliable instrument in the hands of the Lord.[6] Vinobhaji in his *Talks on Gita*[7] observes : " How does one become a flute in Krishna's hand ? .... To be a flute means to become hollow. But I am stuffed full with passions and desires. How then can music come through me ? My tone is gruff. I am gross. I am filled with *ahamkara*, the sense of 'I'. I must empty myself of the ego. Only when I become free, altogether empty, will the Lord breathe through me. It is the bhakta that has the vision of God. The Lord says out of compassion for him ; he gives the bhakta *jnana*, and destroys the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom remaining within him."[8] The bhakta is protected on all planes : if there are difficulties they are warded off, if it is indigence, prosperity is ushered in, if ignorance, knowledge is imparted, if he seeks release from bondage, he is given *moksha*.[9] To attain the Lord we are asked to practise the presence of God in all that we do and dedicate all our activities unreservedly to Him ; That is the " strategic imperative " : " whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away and whatever you practise in the form of austerities, do it all as an offering to Me."[10] At all times remember me and fight."[11] Above all is the consoling assurance given to us by the author of the Gita : " Proclaim it boldly, O Son of Kunti, that my devotees never perish.[12] Know for certain (*pratijanihi na me bhakta pranasyati*). Nor is there any return for them to the world of samsara."[13]

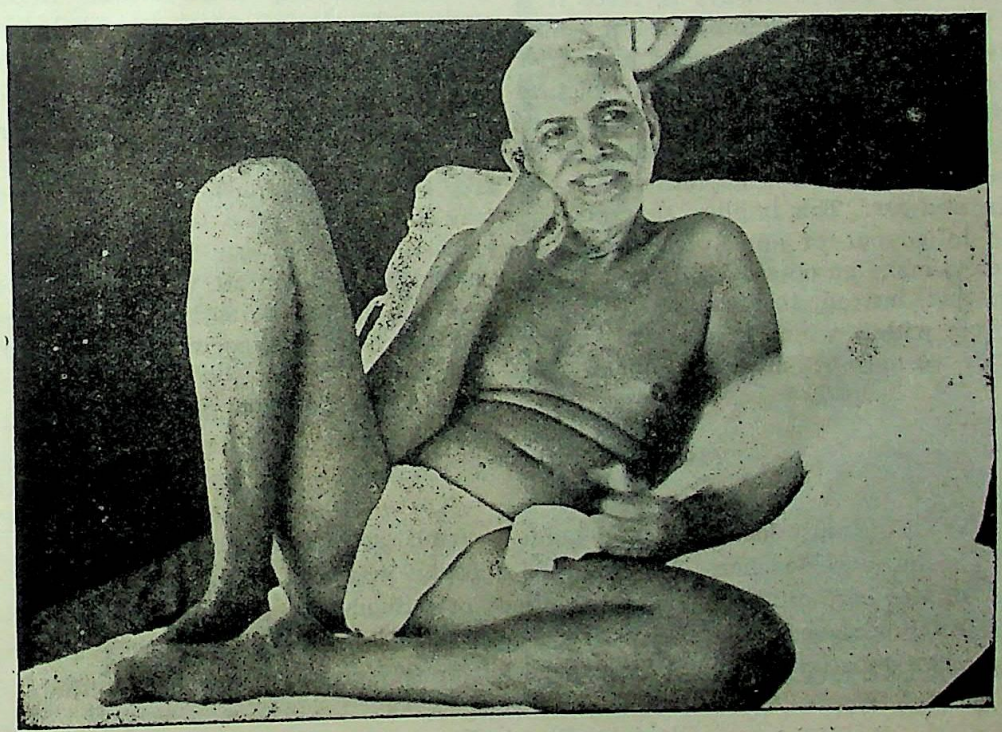
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[3] *Ch.* XI, 33.
[4] *Ch.* III, 30.
[5] *Ch.* XVIII, 66.
[6] *Ch.* IX, 33.
[7] *Talks on Gita*, p. 157.
[8] *Ch.* X, 10-11.
[9] *Ch.* VII, 16.
[10] *Ch.* IX, 27.
[11] *Ch.* VIII, 7.
[12] *Ch.* IX, 31.
[13] *Ch.* VI, 6.

SINCE WE ARE AT HOME . . . .

By
WEI WU WEI

ALL the sages of all the ages have told us, in a dozen different ways, both clearly and obscurely, that phenomenal (apparent) entities cannot attain or achieve 'enlightenment' *for there is no such state or condition which is other than what such phenomena noumenally ARE.* Nor has any sage stated this obvious fact so simply and lucidly as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, nor perhaps more often.



But there seems to be an aspect of this eternal verity which has been left to us to clarify, a work which has been undertaken by none so patiently as by Douglas Harding, which is to point out that nothing can keep us in imaginary 'bondage' so firmly as our conditioned faculty of objectifying our phenomenal 'selves' and thereby obscuring our vision of what we are. In illustration let me simply refer to the professional or amateur *extrapolaters* represented by perfectly worthy young ladies whose personal ambition leads them to devote their youth to visualizing themselves as they imagine others see them, by becoming *mannequins* or film-stars, in which process there are relatively few hours of a day during which their minds are engaged otherwise than in making images of themselves *as seen from outside.* But men do it also, both young and old, in fact do not we all do it, if less continually; indeed are we not all conditioned to do it, even trained (or mistrained) to do it from infancy to old age?

Let us now glance from one extreme to the other: it is recorded of St. John that a devotee commissioned an artist to paint his portrait, and when it was executed the Saint asked permission to see it. He looked at it

in amazement and exclaimed, "Do you really mean that what you see when you look at me is like that?" He lived noumenally, i.e. *from* within, and had never bothered to think of how his *persona*, or 'mask', appeared to others. To-day, with all our mirrors, shaving, hair-doing, etc., we cannot live quite like St. John, nor should it be necessary, however desirable, but we can perceive the problem, realize its importance, and readjust our habitual angle of vision; which is to say that we can abandon, gradually or suddenly, our conditioned habit of looking — *and so of living* — *from* the wrong direction.

This is, of course, very simple — as the truth must be and so always is, since it is what we are and therefore 'nearer' than conditioned falsehood. Instead of habitually extrapolating (making a fanciful picture *seen from outside*) of what we *suppose to be* 'ourselves', we need only desist and so be free to re-integrate what, absolutely, we must be and *are*. This implies, superficially, ceasing to go out of ourselves psychically in order to make an object of what we think we are, and, instead, to be satisfied to perceive *from* within, which is, after all, where *whatever*-we-may-be must be our centre. Then, from 'here', and not from 'there', we can 'apperceive', which means 'mind looking at itself'; and this is noumenal living and opens the door to the state of grace in which the saints and sages found that they were not different from Godhead.

To saints and sages, of course, these things could not matter, which is to say that then they *no longer* matter, for from whole or noumenal mind no thing matters, since no 'thing' can be other than an image in a mind divided into subject-and-object, neither of which dual elements has any being as such. 'Things' are concepts extended conceptually in 'space-time', and each has its interdependent counterpart, forever positively apart, and forever negatively undivided in mind which is 'whole', which means 'healed' as well as 'holy' (wholly having lost its 'w' in the wash).

But for us who have not yet realised, or even perhaps understood, that potentially we are, because we must be, saints-and-sages, may it not be a good idea to stop eternally extrapolating our supposed 'selves' and, instead, to re-integrate what quite certainly, and also quite obviously, we then remain, and which is, with equal certainty, what we ARE?

You must look after and guide yourself, as in the future there will be no more teachers. A new era has begun in which the pure doctrine of the Lord Buddha lies in the hands of individuals; each one is separately responsible, for I do not think we can carry on in the way we have done up till now. We can no longer rely on groups and communities.

— Said by Chentz Rimpoche to his disciple Trungpa Tulku in Tibet about 1954, quoted by him in *Born in Tibet*, Allen & Unwin, p. 97.

O Lord God, when shall I be made one with Thee and be molten into Thy love, so that I wholly forget myself? Be Thou in me and I in Thee, and grant that we may so abide, always together in one.

— Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.

YOGA VASISHTA SARA[1]

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

Based on a translation made By SWAMI SURESANANDA

CHAPTER III

THE MARKS OF A LIBERATED PERSON (JIVAN MUKTA)

1. The knowledge of the Self is the fire that burns up the dry grass of desire. This indeed is what is called samadhi, not mere abstention from speech.

2. He who realizes that the whole universe is really nothing but consciousness and remains quite calm is protected by the armour of Brahman ; he is happy.

3. The yogi who has attained the state which is beyond everything and remains always cool as the full moon is truly the Supreme Lord.

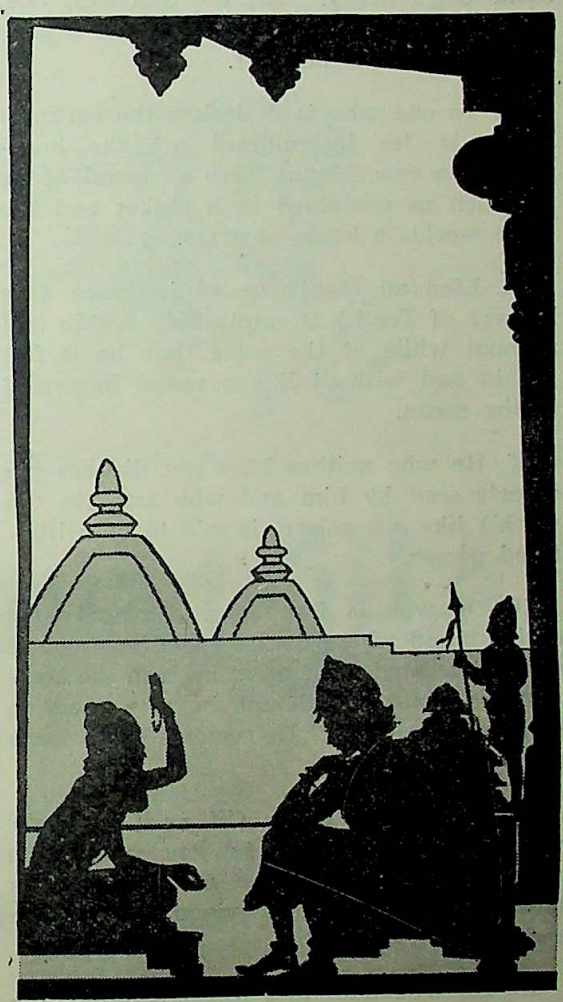
4. He who reflects in his innermost heart upon the purport of the Upanishads dealing with Brahman and is not moved by joy and sorrow, is not tormented by samsara.

5. Just as birds and beasts do not take shelter on a mountain of fire so also evil (thoughts) never occur to a knower of Brahman.

6. Wise men also, like foolish men, (occasionally) make others angry, (but they do so only) in order to test their ability to control their innate feelings (that is to say to see how far the anger of other person will affect on them).

7. Just as the trembling (of the body) caused by the (imaginary) snake persists (for some time) even after realizing that there is no snake, so also the effect of delusion persists (for some time) even after getting rid of all delusions.

8. Just as the crystal is not stained by what is reflected in it, so also a knower of truth is not really affected by the result of his acts.



9. Even while he is intent on outward actions (the knower of Truth) always remains introverted and extremely calm like one asleep.

10. Firmly convinced of non-duality and enjoying perfect mental peace, yogis go about their work seeing the world as if it were a dream.

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[1] Continued from our last issue.

11. Let death come to him (the knower of truth) today or at the end of aeons ; he remains untarnished like gold buried in mire.

12. He may cast off his body at Kashi or in the house of an outcaste (*lit.* one who cooks dog's flesh). He, the desireless one, is liberated at the very moment he attains knowledge (of Brahman).

13. To one who is desireless the earth, O Rama, is (as insignificant as) the hoof-print of a cow, Mount Meru a mound, space as much as contained in a casket and the three worlds a blade of grass.

14. Like an empty vessel in space (the knower of Truth) is empty both within and without while at the same time he is full within and without like a vessel immersed in the ocean.

15. He who neither likes nor dislikes the objects seen by him and who acts (in the world) like one asleep, is said to be a liberated person.

16. He who is free from the knots (of desires) and whose doubts have been set at rest is liberated even when he is in the body (*jivan mukta*). Although he may seem to be bound he is free. He remains like a lamp in a picture.

17. He who has easily (*lit.* as if in sport) cast off all his egoistic tendencies and has abandoned even the object of meditation, is said to be liberated even when he is in the body.

18. He who does not, like one blind, recognize (*lit.* leaves far behind) his relatives, who dreads attachment as he would a serpent, who looks upon, sense-enjoyments and diseases alike, who disregards the company of women as he would a blade of grass and who finds no distinction between a friend a foe, experiences happiness in this world and the next.

19. He who casts away from his mind all objects of perception and, attaining perfect quiescence, remains still as space, unaffected by sorrow, is a liberated man ; he is the Supreme Lord.

20. The noble-hearted man whose desires of the heart have come to an end is a liberated man ; it does not matter whether he does or does not practise meditation or perform action.

21. The idea of Self in the non-Self is bondage. Abandonment of it is liberation. There is neither bondage nor liberation for the ever-free Self.

22. If, by perceiving that the objects of perception do not really exist, the mind is completely freed (from those objects), there ensues the supreme bliss of liberation.

23. Abandonment of all latent tendencies is said to be the best (i.e. real) liberation by the wise ; that is also the faultless method (of attaining Liberation).

24. Liberation is not on the other side of the sky, nor is it in the nether world, nor on the earth ; the extinction of the mind resulting from the eradication of all desires is regarded as liberation.

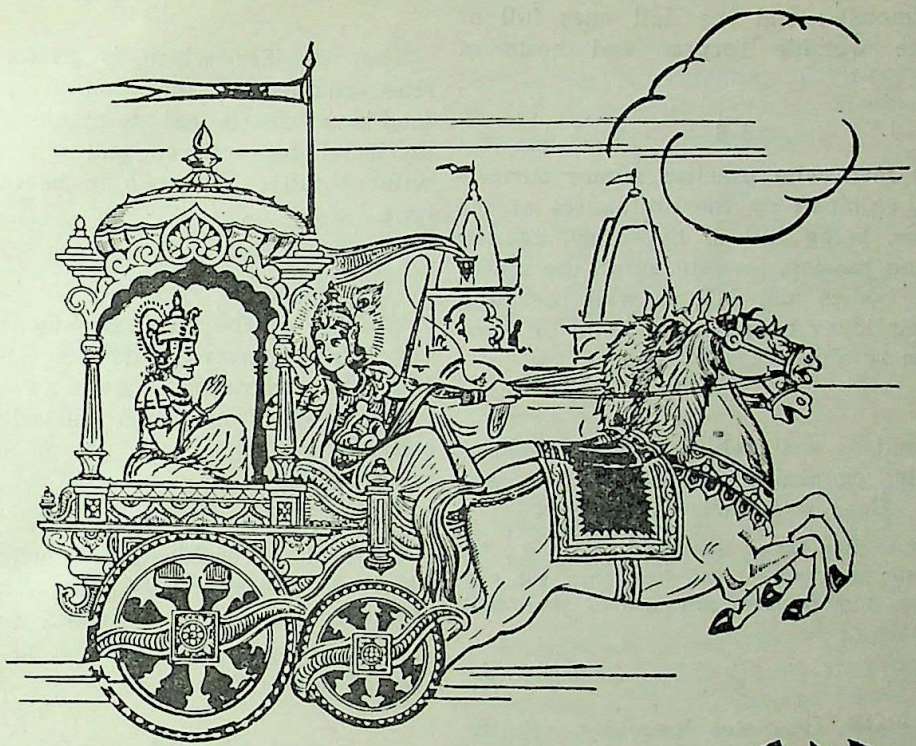
25. O Rama, there is no intellect, no nescience, no mind and no individual soul (*jiva*). They are all imagined in Brahman.

26. To one who is established in what is infinite, pure consciousness, bliss and unqualified non-duality, where is the question of bondage or liberation, seeing that there is no second entity ?

27. O Rama, the mind has, by its own activity, bound itself ; when it is calm it is free.

When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, when the intellect wavers not — then is known, say the wise, the highest state.

— *Katha Upanishad.*



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Arjuna said :

What is the nature — pure or passionate or dull (sattvic, rajasic or tamasic)—of those, O Krishna, who giving up the ordinances of the scriptures worship (offering sacrifices, giving gifts, etc.) with faith ?

(This question arises out of the statement of the Lord in verse 24 of Chapter XVI.)

2

Sri Bhagavan said :

Faith, which is inborn in embodied beings, is three-fold : pure, passionate and dull. Hear now about it.

3

The faith of everyone is according to his nature, O Bharata. Man is essentially endowed with faith. What his faith is, that indeed is he.

4

Those endowed with purity (or goodness) worship the gods ; those (endowed) with passion worship Yakshas and Rakshasas

(i.e. demons) ; and the dull ones full of ignorance worship corpses and hosts of spirits.

5-6

Those men who practise severe austerities not enjoined by the ordinances of the scriptures, being full of hypocrisy, egoism, desire and passion, tormenting all the senses in their bodies and ME as well presiding over their inner being, know them to be of demoniac resolve.

7

The food as well, which is dear to all, is three-fold. So also is sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear now their distinctions.

(Because men are of three-fold nature — pure, passionate and dull —, the food they eat and activities they perform are also of three-fold nature.)

8

Food, which promotes longevity, vitality (or intelligence), energy, health, happiness and delight, which is delicious, bland, nourishing and agreeable is dear to the pure.

9

Food which is bitter, sour, saline, very hot, pungent, dry and burning and which gives pain, grief and disease is dear to men of passion.

10

Food, which is stale (or spoiled) and insipid, putrid, and polluted, left off by others and impure is dear to the dull.

11

The sacrifice, performed with rites ordained by the scriptures by persons who do not expect any fruit therefrom and performed with a sense of duty, with mind equipoised, is said to be pure.

12

Know that sacrifice to be of a passionate type which is performed, O best of the Bharatas, with a fruit in view and with a sense of self-importance (or for the sake of display).

13

That sacrifice which is performed with rites ordained by the scriptures, in which food is not distributed, no hymns chanted, no sacrificial fees offered and which is done without faith, is known to be of the dull type.

14

Worship of the gods, Brahmans, teachers (or elderly persons) and the wise, purity, straight-forwardness, continence and non-violence — this is called austerity of the body.

15

Truthful, agreeable and beneficial words which do not annoy and the study of the scriptures are said to be austerity of speech.

(Jnaneshwara adds 'utterance of the divine name' to this list.)

16

Serenity, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity are said to be austerity of mind.

17

This three-fold austerity performed with utmost faith by persons harbouring no desire for its fruit is said to be pure (sattvic).

18

The austerity that is practised for glorification, honour and to gain respect and with ostentation, which is unstable and insecure is said to be passionate (rajasic).

19

The austerity that is performed with self-torture, out of a deluded understanding or for the purpose of injuring others is said to be of a dull type (tamasic).

20

The gift that is made without expectation of return, considering it as a duty, given at the proper place, at the right time and to a worthy person is known as pure (sattvic).

21

The gift that is made begrudgingly, with expectation of return or reward is known to be of a passionate type (rajasic).

22

The gift that is made to unworthy persons at an improper place and at the wrong time, with a feeling of contempt (or without proper ceremony) and without regard is declared dull (tamasic).

23

Brahman is declared to be three-fold — Aum — Tat — Sat. By this at the beginning were created the Brahmanas, the Vedas and the sacrifices.

('Aum' is the verbal symbol of Reality it is the highest Mantra and is the essence of the Vedas. 'Tat' is that transcendental Being which is beyond the world, the witness of all. It is Reality, Brahman. 'Sat' is defined in verses 26 and 27).

24

Hence the acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity as ordained by the scriptures start with the utterance of 'Aum' by the followers of the Vedas.

25

With the utterance of the word 'Tat' the various acts of sacrifice, austerity and gift by the seekers of liberation are performed without seeking recompense.

26

The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of reality and goodness. So also, O Son of Pritha, the word 'Sat' is used for a praiseworthy act.

(Such as a marriage ceremony according to Sankara or any pure act according to Jnaneshwara).

27

Steadfastness in sacrifice, penance and gift is also expressed by the word 'Sat' and so is action done for its sake 'Sat'.

28

That which is offered in sacrifice, given in charity, performed as a penance and whatever is done (such as praise, homage, etc.), without faith is known as 'asat', O Son of Pritha; it is counted for naught in this as also in the next world.

Here ends the seventeenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita entitled "*The Yoga of the Division of the Threefold Faith*".

"MAY MY SPEECH BE ONE . . ."

May my speech be one with my mind, and may
my mind be one with my speech.
O thou self-luminous Brahman, remove the veil
of ignorance from before me, that I may
behold thy light.
Do thou reveal to me the spirit of the scriptures.
May the truth of the scriptures be ever present
to me.
May I seek day and night to realize what I
learn from the sages.

— *Aitareya Upanishad.*

THE VEDAPARAYANA

SRI SOOKTAM

(Hymn to SRI or the Goddess of Prosperity)

1. O Jataveda (Agni, Fire-god) ! Bring unto me Lakshmi who resembles a doe of golden colour, who is adorned with garlands of silver and gold, delightful like the moon and abounding in riches.

2. O Jataveda ! Bring unto me that Lakshmi who will not desert me so that I may obtain the gold, cows, horses and followers bestowed by her.

3. I invoke that Goddess of Prosperity who comes with horses in front and chariots in the middle and whose coming is announced by the trumpeting of elephants. May that Goddess of Prosperity come and bless me.

4. I invoke that Goddess of Prosperity whose nature is bliss, who wears a gentle smile, who is surrounded by gold on all sides, who is extremely benignant, lustrous and always contented. She makes (those who worship her) contented and is of the colour of a lotus and seated on a lotus.

5. I seek refuge (at the feet of) the Goddess of Prosperity who is bright as the moon, whose fame blazes like a fire in the world, who is adorned by the Devas and who is extremely generous. May my poverty disappear. I invoke you again.

6. O Goddess that art bright as the sun ! That noble tree of thine known as *bilva* came into existence as a result of your austerities (tapas). May its fruits destroy my impurities of mind and outer features of poverty with thy grace.

7. May the friend of the Devas (Kubera, the Lord of Wealth who is a friend of Mahadeva or Siva) come to me with fame and wealth (*lit.* jewels). May he grant me who am living in this kingdom, fame and riches !

8. I shall (by your grace) destroy that distressing poverty, the first born in the form of hunger and thirst, (i.e. which prevents the advent of prosperity). Dispel from my house every form of want and insufficiency.

9. I invoke that Goddess of Prosperity, the controller of all beings, who is known by her fragrance, who is invincible, who is always full of wealth and fertility.

10. O Goddess of Prosperity! May we obtain the desires of our heart, our longings for food and milk products, and may we utter only truthful words. Let us attain glory.

11. O Kardama! Make her who was born to Kardama (i.e. to you) abide with me. Make the Goddess of Prosperity who is the mother (of the universe) and wears garlands of lotuses, dwell in our family.

12. Let the waters produce oily products (like butter) in my house. O Chiklita, dwell in my house and make the Goddess of Prosperity, the Divine Mother, also dwell in my family.

13. O Jataveda! Bring to me the extremely benign Lakshmi (another name for the goddess of Prosperity), reddish in complexion, who dwells in lakes and who possesses the moon's brilliance and gold in abundance.

14. O Jataveda! Bring to me the extremely benign Lakshmi of a golden complexion who dwells in lakes, who is the bestower of plenty, who wears a garland of gold, who is resplendent like the sun and abounds in wealth.

15. O Jataveda! Bring to me that Lakshmi who will not forsake me and by whose grace I may obtain in plenty, gold, cows, women servants, horses and men servants.

16. He who is desirous of becoming prosperous should, after making himself pure and controlling his senses, make daily offerings of melted butter (in the fire). He should also repeat always the (above) fifteen stanzas.

17. O Thou whose face is like a lotus, whose thighs resemble the lotus, whose eyes are like a lotus and who is born of a lotus! Bless me, O Goddess with lotus eyes, so that I may attain happiness.

18. Thou who art extremely rich givest horses, givest cows, givest riches. May riches come to me O Goddess, who grantest all prayers.

19. O Mother of all beings, grant me sons, grandsons, wealth, grains, elephants, horses, goats, sheep, cows, chariots and long life.

19. We meditate upon Lakshmi, the supreme Goddess, the controller of all, brilliant as the sun and moon and fire.

20. By your grace may Agni grant us riches, may Vayu (the wind-god) grant us riches, may Surya (the sun god) grant us riches, may the Vasus grant us riches, may Indra and Brihaspati grant us riches, may Varuna grant us riches.

21. O Vainateya, drink the soma. Let the Destroyer of Vritra (Indra) drink the soma. Let the (other) gods who drink soma grant me riches (required for conducting) the soma (sacrifice).

22. The devotees (of the Goddess of Prosperity) who have earned religious merit are not affected by anger, envy, avarice or evil thoughts.

23. O Night covering the light, May the lightnings of the cloud in thy Heaven pour down! Let all seeds grow! Protect! Kill the Brahman-haters.

24. O Goddess who art fond of lotus, who belongest to the highest order of women known as Padminis, who holdest a lotus in thy hand, who art seated on a lotus, whose eyes resemble the petals of a lotus, who art loved by the whole world and who pleasest the minds of all beings! Be pleased to place your lotus feet upon me.

25. May that Lakshmi born of a lotus and seated on a lotus, with full hips, eyes like the petals of a lotus, deep and round navel, bent with the fullness of her breasts, wearing bright upper and lower garments, bathed every day with water in golden and bejewelled pots by celestial elephants, with a lotus in her hand, ever dwell in my house with all auspicious qualities.

26. I worship Lakshmi, the daughter of the ocean of milk, the queen of Sriranga, whom all the celestial damsels serve, the sole seed and sprout (source) of the world, whose slightest look has endowed Brahma, Indra and he who wears Ganga (Siva) with the powers they now possess, the mother of the three worlds, she who was born of a lotus and is the consort of Mukunda (Vishnu).

27. May Lakshmi the possessor of Siddhis (supernatural powers), Lakshmi, the bestower of liberation, Lakshmi who grants victory and is Sarasvatí, Lakshmi the Goddess of Prosperity, Lakshmi the grantor of boons, be always gracious to me.

28. I worship the Goddess of the world who holds in her hands the noble *ankusa* (a weapon generally used by elephant-drivers) and a rope, whose hand has the pose of protection against fear, who is seated on a lotus, who is lustrous like ten million rising suns and who is the primal being.

29. Obeisance to Thee, O Goddess Narayani, Tryambika, who art the abode of all auspicious qualities, who art auspiciousness itself, who fulfillests all the desires (of her devotees), who art the only refuge of every one.

30. We shall try to know the great Goddess. We shall meditate on the consort of Vishnu. May Lakshmi guide us!

31. May the Goddess of Prosperity grant me, her devotee, lustrous looks, longevity, good health, grains, wealth, cattle, many sons and a long life of a hundred years.

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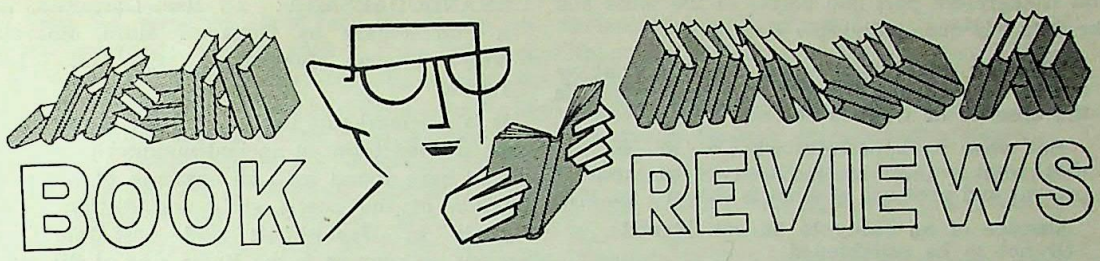
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POSTHUMOUS PIECES: By Wei Wu Wei. Published by Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong. Pages: xiv+232. Price: HK $25.

Wei Wu Wei is an adept in using the English language to carry the reader beyond the meaning of words, towards a direct understanding of Truth. 'Posthumous Pieces' described by him as 'dead' are indeed very much alive so far as the student of *vichara* (enquiry) is concerned. They are sign-posts which encourage the pilgrim to take heart and proceed on this path. These pieces are not meant to be merely read but to be meditated upon, as part of one's sadhana.

Time and space are taken up for scrutiny and are found to have no objective reality. It is therefore concluded that the world of objects assumed to exist in space can have no objective reality either.

"The 'past' is a memory,
The 'future' is a supposition,
The 'present' is passed before we can apprehend it." (p. 4)

What actual event can take place in such an imagined duration?

"The only 'present' therefore is *presence* and must necessarily be what we are. Such presence, then, is inevitably outside time and must be 'intemporality'." (p. 4)

"Nothing could be more obviously imagined than 'space' and 'time', yet people assume them to be permanent objective realities! Basic they may indeed be, but as the basis of an elaborate dimensional fiction." (p. 11)

This proves the Zen truth that there is not a *thing* from the beginning. How then is one to explain the existence of sentient beings and the world of their experiences? These are mere concepts. The objective world and the subjects in it are all imaginations of the mind. The author tells us that space and time represent the primary or basic concepts. Space-Time holds in its bosom the entire cosmic phenomena.

Why should we wage a war against objectivity? Because, it is the master-illusion of all mankind, called *avidya* or ignorance, and has to be removed before Truth can emerge.

"Positivity is temporal and finite,
Negativity is timeless and infinite,
But neither exists otherwise than conceptually." (p. 41)

"Phenomena ARE 'mind',
All that is sensorially-perceived IS 'mind',
And we are the perceiving sentience.
Sentience as such is phenomenal experience of 'mind',
And 'mind' means, and is, noumenon.
The apparent existence of phenomena
Is the apparent existence of 'mind',
But we can only be conscious of 'mind',
When we become aware of noumenal presence.
Using the word 'I' to indicate our phenomenal absence." (p. 55)

Once objectivity is wiped out, Absolute Mind or Brahman comes into being. This is the mind of the *jivan-mukta* (one who is Liberated even while he is in the body). This state of Whole Mind is unknown to the ordinary man who always lives with a split mind, a mind which is accustomed to split experiences into subjects and objects.

"We have to split mind in order to dream,
We have to split mind in order to live and to die,
Let us stop splitting mind — and stay whole.

One might be lonely in the absence of 'other'.
Unless 'one' were 'all' there could be no 'one',
Unless 'all' were 'one' there could be no 'all'." (p. 16)

The concepts of the mind are perceived by it as objective reality. Dreams bear testimony to this. But for this mysterious faculty of the mind, there will be no sentient beings, nor the world of their experience.

All metaphysical writings are only for making it clear that 'objectivity' is a figment of the mind. Objectivity is only a concept of the mind

and is therefore part and parcel of the mind and the Mind is one, indivisible and Whole.

"We are conditioned to suppose that what we are is the presence of what is present, which is the absence of what is absent.

But when we apperceive what we are we find that what we are is the absence of what is present and presence of what is absent." (p. 161)

"Absence of an entity to be enlightened
Or not to be enlightened
Is the double negative, the double absence,
Of Shen Hui and all the Great Masters."
(p. 150)

These intuitions of Wei Wu Wei strongly remind us of Zen Masters and Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Maharshi said: "Ask yourself 'Who Am I?'". Wei Wu Wei puts it characteristically:

"There is only one question — and the asking is the answer." (p. 110)

The book bears the stamp of a writer who has a strong urge to express 'himself'. This is what gives his writings a style, all his own.

DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

THE MESSAGE OF THE UPANISHADS: By Swami Ranganathananda, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 587. Price Rs. 15.

This is an exposition of three Upanishads, *Isa*, *Kena* and *Katha*, by a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, Swami Ranganathananda, who is a profound scholar and an effective and persuasive speaker. The Sunday discourses he gave to crowded audiences at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in 1962-63 are now brought together in an attractive volume by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, well known for the contribution it is making for the cultural renaissance of our country.

In his interpretation of the Upanishad texts, verse by verse, Swami Ranganathananda follows, in the main, Sri Sankara's commentary. He also quotes profusely from Swami Vivekananda's *Complete Works*. In the elucidation of most passages, especially in regard to the world-appearance, the evidence of modern science is cited. On the whole, the present volume is a very helpful introduction to the Philosophy of the Upanishads. As the Swami rightly points out, "Vedanta is not interested in serving a bundle of dogmas and creeds, or a set of socio-political do's and dont's, to spiritually hungry humanity. It lovingly seeks to help man to grow to his infinite spiritual dimension." (p. 468). The reader of this book will find in it practical guidance in the quest after the Eternal.

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

CHHANDODARSANA: By Rshi Daivarata, with a Commentary by Ganapati Muni, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 492. Price Rs. 45.

It is a remarkable book. Had the Sanskrit text been printed from an ancient manuscript, scholars would have found in it an evidence of the continuation of the poetic style and diction of the Rgveda in Upanishadic and post-Upanishadic periods, so genuine is the Vedic ring of the words and lines of this metrical composition. The impression of this genuineness distinguishes the verses from skilful archaisms produced by mature literary artists. For example, the great Kalidasa himself wrote a stanza in a Vedic metre (*rkchandasa*) in his Sakuntala, but there the poet describes a fire ritual in his own way without praising or praying.

Daivarata keeps close to the Vedic diction and versification, as well as subject matter. As in the Rgveda the titles of his hymns name the Rshi, the Devata and the metre. The Commentator writing in Sanskrit, gives the break-up of the lines in separate words (*padapata*) and writes an exhaustive and illuminating *bhashya* (exposition) referring by comparison to Vedic hymns. The English translation, which does justice to the original, makes the book accessible to a large circle of readers.

We are told in the introduction of Daivarata's mastery over the four Vedas. The commentator, Ganapati Muni (the Guru of Daivarata), says that in 1917, at the age of twenty five, Daivarata in a state of Samadhi began to utter words which were found by him to be Vedic metrical expression. They continued to come for sixteen days and were written by him. They make the text of the present book which, unfortunately, had to wait for fifty years before it could be published. Ganapati Muni claims that these mantras (450 in all) were revealed to Daivarata on account of his 'having attained the supersight of a Rshi through Tapas.' In Indian spiritual tradition, claims of Divine inspiration as well as God-realization are entertained and examined by qualified people.

The idea of a fresh revelation is as old as the Atharva Veda in the opening hymn of which there is a prayer to Vachaspati (Lord of *Vak*, the revealed Word) to 'come again with the Divine mind' and 'bring joy' and a repeated appeal: 'May there be the sacred Vedic knowledge (*sruta*) in me — yes in me.' (1.1.2). We are reminded of the spiritual preparation through Tapas by the following: 'Strain my powers even here, as the string is strained between two ends of the bow.' (*ibid*).

Apart from the religious, there may also be an intellectual approach to the book. From this point of view the most outstanding impression left by Chhandodarsana is the firm hold of its author on the fundamentals of the Vedic concept of the Divine. These include the acceptance of the Divine both as the Unmanifest Absolute — formless, attributeless and sexless, and as Deva, a being of splendour, having form, attribute and sex, who manifests the Absolute on the relative plane through the glory of the phenomenal world. This has led to the identification in the Vedas of a Deva with the Absolute (That — *Tat* — is Agni, is Aditya, is Vayu,' etc. YV.Vs.32), the identification of one Deva with all others (like Agni in RV. 2.1), and the assertion that all Devas, being identified with one Deva, become One in Him (as in AV. 13.4 where Savita is spoken of as the One and One alone, in whom 'all Devas become one.').

As Daivarata fully accepts this Vedic concept in his hymns, his book may be taken as a creative commentary on the spirit of the Rg Veda, as it happens in the case of mantras in later Vedas which are repetitions of Rg Vedic mantras with a difference that explains the meaning intended by the earlier Veda. For example, the expression stand erect (*uttishthata*) in the Rgveda (10. 53. 8) is changed into 'be heroic' (*viryaddhvam*) in the Atharvaveda (12. 2. 26). Similarly in Daivarata's book, a half-line from the Rgveda, 'inspires with her light' (1. 3. 12), where light is a physical phenomenon with a symbolic significance, appears with the word light' substituted by 'intelligence' (Ch. Dars. 1. 1. 2). Further, in describing Savita he speaks of him as the immortal (*amrta*), indwelling One (*antarnihita*). And he calls Agni Purusha and Atman, and Sarasvati the Manifest Absolute (*pratyaksham Brahma*) in the language of the Upanishads. In the same manner Brahmanaspati (Lord of the revealed Word) is addressed as Brahman, Atman, Purusha and Indra.

It is pleasing to find that Daivarata has retrieved Vedic Indra from the degradation to which he has been subjected in the later mythology of the Puranas. Prayers like the following are very significant: 'I follow Him in practising Tapas with the help of OM. I seek Indra alone to obtain bliss' (*sam*; Ch. Dar. 4. 5). Except for his use of Upanishadic terms and occasional substitution of mythology for Vedic symbolism, the book is composed generally in Rgvedic language and imagery. He uses accented words and handles the Vedic Gayatri, Anushtubh, Trishtubh and Jagati metres fairly well. What strikes us in reading the stanzas is that there is no diminution in the intensity of his poetic rapture from the beginning to the end. In terms of the analogy in the prayer of the Atharva Veda sage quoted above, his powers are fully strained like the strings between the ends of a bow.

We congratulate the sponsors of the publication of this rare modern book of sacred poetry on the success of their efforts. We are glad to know that Daivarata at 77 is quite active and two more of his books are in the press. We shall await their publication with interest.

PROF. A. C. BOSE

CRISIS IN CONSCIOUSNESS — THE BATTLE WITHIN THE MIND: By Robert Powell, James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 31 Queen Anne's Gate, London S.W.1. Pp. 199. Price 25sh.

According to the author who has already earned a name for himself by his first book '*Zen and Reality*', which was a significant contribution to the present day philosophic thought, the confusion and conflict which one sees everywhere are merely the reflection of the confusion and turmoil in the mind of the individual. Hence has he appropriately given the sub-title to this book: "The Battle within the mind". Naturally, the first requirement in the world today, emphasies Robert Powell, is to tackle, not the many problems, but the problem maker. The book is a strong appeal to the conscience of the world — not to forsake the world — but to give up all the "illusions" about the world, life and the society which we have all helped to build — in short, all the ideas which we have invented and to which we cling for the emotional security that has provided us for escape from the truth about ourselves. So, really nothing more is necessary for man to find peace within himself than that he surrender wholeheartedly to this truth — that he is mortal, vulnerable and totally nothing in the scheme of things. This does not mean mere resignation, but that we live it every moment of the day.

Having explained in his earlier book how Reality can only be discovered through self-knowledge, the author indicates certain pointers to the same truth in this work which, according to him, are to be found in J. Krishnamurti — whose approach to life is not only clear, simple and unambiguous, but admirably suited to the needs of the modern man.

Time and again, while persuing the book, the reader is reminded of H. P. Blavatsky's famous injunction — "The mind is the great slayer of the Real; let the disciple slay the slayer." Particularly significant is the chapter on "Window on non-duality" where, dissecting the various modifications of the mind, Powell explains how a

mind that desires the more and more or the less and the less, a mind whose simple needs have become mixed up and given rise to desire, a mind which craves continually for stronger sensations, must inevitably lead to pain and sorrow. The whole work seems to be primarily concerned with the question of how to end thought and to answer the age-old query from the days of the Delphic Oracle: "Who am I?" and answered to the present day by the Sage of Tiruvannamalai. This self-enquiry is done by exploring the various aspects of the mind exhaustively, and leaving all teachings behind, the reader is taken on a journey into the depths of meditation — probing ever further into the Unknown. The insight is clear during this investigation into the fundamentals and a new light is thrown on certain specialised problems such as the nature of the Universe — whether finite or infinite; properties of the "fundamental particles", the body-mind relationship; as also the question of freedom and causality.

The writer warns the reader in the true Krishnamurti style against accepting any statement made in this book on any subject: "for if he does, he acts against the whole spirit of the work." In that case, he would merely add another idea to his existing store — and ideas can always be countered by other ideas. "To this process there is no end and it has absolutely nothing to do with the perception of Truth, which only comes when the mind is empty of all ideas. It does not matter which particular problem the reader tackles; as long as there is vigorous inquiry, he is opening himself to the Truth, and that will bring its own action. But merely to agree or disagree is to throw away a spiritual opportunity."

THE LOGIC OF RELATIONSHIP: By Frederick S. Johnston, Jr., Philosophical Library, New York 10016, Pp. 110, Price $4.00.

"No generality is true, including this one", is an old adage which affirms the futility of thinking in terms of the absolutes. However disconcerting this saying may be to our mind, it is nonethe-less a basic truth in our daily experience. Unfortunately our reason refuses to acknowledge the truth, as it is based so long only on Inference to the exclusion of Reference. The book under review propounds an original form of syllogism that goes beyond yet does not exclude the traditional methods of proof.

The author deals effectively with man's greatest problem of himself and his environment which he has created by his loyalty to the Aristotelean methodology, whereby man has systematised his thinking purely in absolute terms. Thus the classical form of logic has presented the greatest challenge to man, and the writer points out that by changing the form of logic he can gain his greatest opportunity.

As Johnston rightly discusses the psychological implications of this older form of logic:

> "No matter how logical our Inference, if we cannot relate opposing feelings in our conscious minds our thoughts will be unrealistic. Because Inference has caused our intellect to accept opposable terms as being absolute our emotions have been sympathetic to this conditioning. We might learn that opposing feelings are not contradictory feelings. Neither opposable feeling is absolute but is instead inclusive of the other to some degree.
>
> "We cannot hate absolutely, consequently there must be some degree of love in our hate. Nor can we love absolutely, consequently there must be some degree of hate in our love. Because the relationship between love and hate is absolute either will maintain its relationship with the other regardless of either's exclusion from the conscious mind into the repressed state of the subconscious mind. The tragedy is that the denied feeling will continue to influence our behaviour and judgment, but in a way over which we have little or no control."

In this interesting book he has postulated that nothing is absolute except relationship. According to him with the addition of Reference to Inference to form the logic of relationship, we can succeed in solving most of our problems. Johnston has thus offered a new instrument for logic to make man more civilized in his behaviour.

JOHN LOCKE: EMPIRICIST, ATOMIST, CONCEPTUALIST AND AGNOSTIC: By John Louis Kraus, Philosophical Library, New York 10016. Pp. 202. Price: $4.95.

None has discussed in more threadbare a fashion the fundamental questions of "Universals" and the "Science of physical things" than John Locke: Empiricist, Atomist, Conceptualist and Agnostic, of the Seventeenth Century. This fourfold interest of the noble thinker has been ably analysed by Dr. Louis Kraus in his Critique on Locke. The order of presentation found in that great writer's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" has been maintained by useful adaptation in the various sections of this book.

While the first section has as its primary aim the examination of Locke's empricist perspective on the origin of the primary contents of the human mind, the next examines the atomic perspective

on the real essence of physical things. The third section deals with the relation of the Conceptualistic perspective on universal ideas which is followed by the examination of the relation between Locke's conceptual perspective of universal ideas of physical things and the agnostic perspective of physical things as far as a science of physical things is concerned.

According to the author it is proved that in Locke's view there is nothing like a "Science of bodies". Not only are Lock's tenets difficult of understanding but are disturbing in their context and it is Dr. Kraus's thesis that Locke was not interested in throwing out speculative or practical truths. His purpose was to inquire into the origin of human knowledge and his enquiry ended in a conviction that experience is the origin of all human knowledge.

THE POSTURE OF CONTEMPLATION: By Frederick C. Lyman, Jr., Philosophical Library, New York 10016. Pp. 123. Price $3.95.

If, according to Patanjali, Yoga is the stilling of the modifications of the thinking principle, the various kinds of efforts that have been made to adjust and overcome the agitations that constantly assail man are described in this book by Frederick Lyman on Contemplation. Being a professional painter since his graduation from Yale University in 1949, the author gives detailed instructions in Physical postures, breathing, concentration and diet, and describes many other associated phenomena relating to contemplation (*dharana*) which is one of the several steps leading to meditation (*samadhi*).

The reader will find many new explanations of the conditions which make contemplation possible and this book can be better appreciated by the layman who is not himself involved in this practice but is always craving for it.

ARGUS.

LIGHT ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES: By Swami Atmananda. Published by Jnana Asram, Parlikad, Wadakancheri (S.R.), Trichur, Kerala. Pp. 32. Price Re. 1.

This booklet by Swami Atmananda, the author of *Sankara's Teachings in His Own Words*, is an attempt to prove that religious rites and practices motivated by the desire for material welfare in this world or the next are no better than acts which are purely worldly. In support of this view the Swami has quoted several passages not only from Manu and Sankara but also from Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, whose small work Upadesa Saram (Quintessence of Wisdom), with a translation and commentary, forms the concluding portion of the book. The price of one rupee appears to be too high.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA (A BRIEF ANALYSIS): By K. V. Iyer. Published by B. G. Paul & Co. Francis Joseph Street, Madras-1. Pp. 87. Price Rs. 1.50.

This small book consists of a large number of verses selected from the Bhagavad Gita and arranged under several heads like Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Sthitha Prajna, Moksha and Jivan Mukta. The slokas are printed in Devanagari and Roman characters and are accompanied by translations in English. It is stated that copies of the book were distributed to the new graduates of the Sri Venkateswara University in 1967 by His Holiness the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetham, Kancheepuram.

BRAHMA VIDYA ABHYASA OR REALITY AND THE METHOD TO TRACE IT: By Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, Narayanasrama Tapovanam P.O., Parlam, (via) Cherpu, Trichur District, Kerala. Pp. 124. Price Rs. 2.50.

This small book on advaita vedanta with a not-very-happy title contains a good deal of useful information, but reads like a collection of extempore talks and has some of the defects of such talks when they are published without adequate revision and editing. However, these defects are not likely to be noticed by beginners who are not very critical and for whose benefit it has obviously been produced.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN EAST AND WEST: Pub. Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 54, Holland Park, London W 11. Pp. 223. Price Rs. 12.50 (Paper), Rs. 18 (Cloth).

This is a happy compilation of Papers on the many-sided personality of Swami Vivekananda contributed on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations of his birth. The writers are from both the East and the West and bring to bear on their subject their characteristic approach highlighting the qualities and services of Swamiji that have appealed to them most.

Swami Ghanananda draws attention to the fact that the 'humanism' of Vivekananda that is so much admired by the Western friends is not of the modern ethical type but based upon his perception and intimate realization of the oneness of all beings in the One Divine. It is essentially spiritual in basis.

Dr. Marozzi dwells upon the relations of Vivekananda with his Master and describes how Sri

Ramakrishna appeared to him in his subtle form on several occasions, at critical junctures, and guided him in his career.

Dr. Ninian Smart warns against the tendency to separate Vivekananda's philosophy from his spiritual teachings. For all that he spoke and preached arose directly from his inner soul-experience.

Writing on 'Vivekananda in Europe' Dr. Marlow records an interesting incident typical of the spirit of Swamiji. A well known philosopher, at the conclusion of one of Vivekananda's addresses at this time, said, "You have spoken splendidly, Sir, and I thank you heartily, but you have told us nothing new." The Swami's reply was immediate: "Sir, I have told you the Truth. That, the Truth, is as old as the immemorial hills, as old as humanity, as old as creation, as old as the Great God. If I have told it in such words as will make you think, make you live up to your thinking, do I not do well in telling it?"

M. P. PANDIT.

The only obstacle is the mind; it must be got over whether you are in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? Therefore, why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment.

— SRI MAHARSHI

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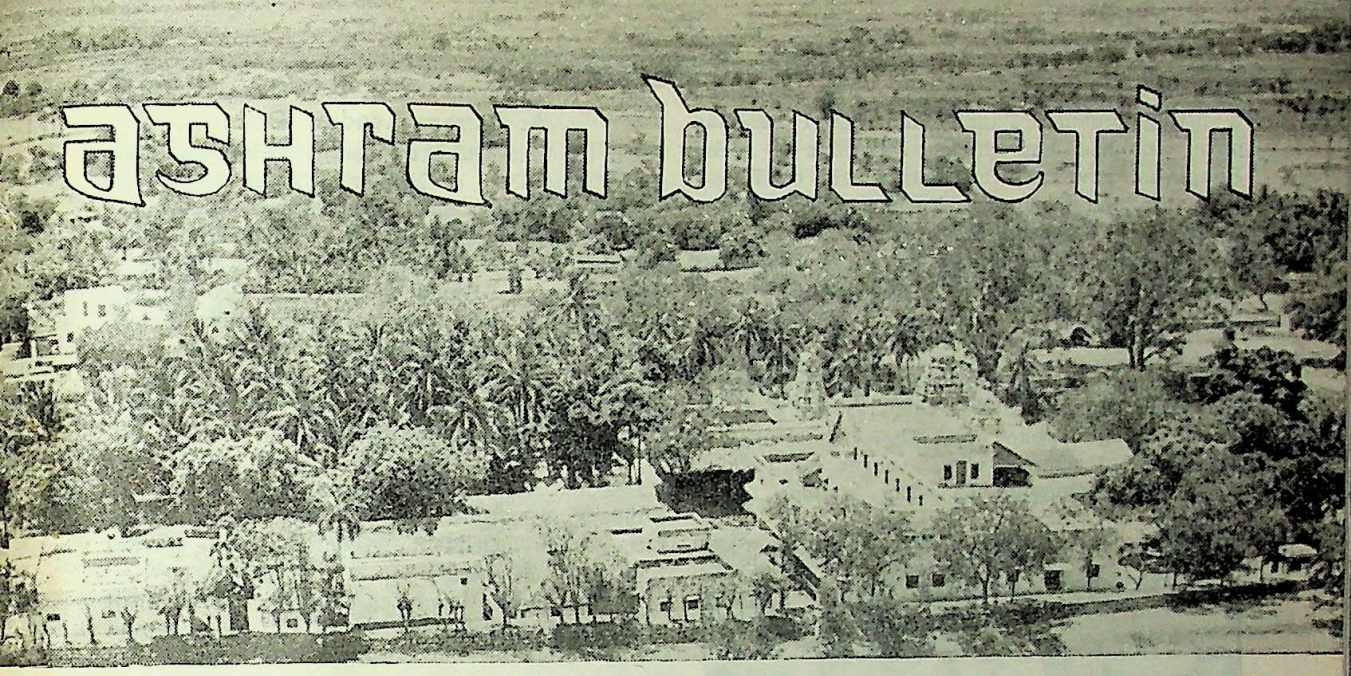


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ARADHANA

At the ASHRAM

THE nineteenth Aradhana or anniversary of the Brahma Nirvana of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at his shrine in the Ashram on 14th April 1969. The celebrations began, as usual, with Ekadasa Rudram and Mahanyasa and the chanting of the Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads. This was followed by elaborate puja at the beautifully decorated shrine. Arati or the waving of lighted lamps and camphor which formed the concluding part of the puja was watched by a large crowd with great devotion. This was followed by the special lunch provided for the devotees. A large number of poor persons were also given food. Messages of good wishes were received from many ministers, officials and prominent leaders. Among those present were Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy, Sri K. K. Nambiar, Sri Framji Dorabji, Professor R. K. Viswanathan, Dr. Bhaskaran of Pondicherry, Dr. S. E. Demetrian, Dr. and Mrs. Maria Burgi, Sri J. V. Somayajulu, Sri S. R. Y. Ramakrishna Prasad and the members of the Prem Sangh, Palghat.

At Madras

Gurupuja was celebrated on 20th April 1969 at 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet. Veda Parayana was followed by music provided by Smt. Lakshmi Sivaraman and Smt. Jnanambal Natesan. Sri P. Sri Acharya, author of "Ramanujacharya", spoke on the mingling of poetry and religion in the Tamil tradition.

At Belgaum

The nineteenth anniversary of Bhagavan's mahanirvana was observed at Sambre, Belgaum, on 13th April 1969. After Vedaparayana by Sri K. Natesan and others and ashtottara puja by Sri P. R. Suryanandan, the audience took part in an elaborate programme of recitation and music based on the compositions of Bhagavan, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, Muruganar, Suddhananda Bharati and Sadhu Om. The celebrations concluded with arati and distribution of prasad.

At Kolhapur

The Dharma Tattvajnana Mandal, Kolhapur, celebrated the 19th Brahma Nirvana of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi on 14th April 1969 in an informal setting, when the translation of Akshara-Manamalai (in Marathi) was formally published by Pandit Balacharya Khupperkar. Sri Pandit Jare Shastri, Padmabhushan V. S. Khandekar (well-known Marathi writer) and Sri G. V. Kulkarni spoke about Maharshi and His Work. At the end devotional songs and arati were sung and prasad was distributed to the audience.

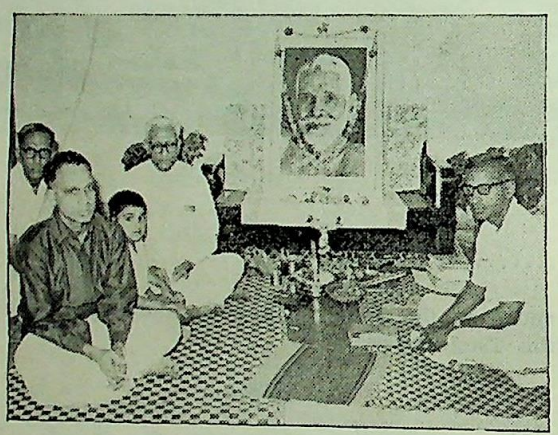
At Poona

The Brahma Nirvana day of Sri Maharshi was celebrated by Sri Bausaheb Athavale of Poona in

a fitting manner. Pandit Annashastri Pandharpure, who had had the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan, gave an illuminating talk on Bhagavan's life and teachings. Earlier in the morning there was Rudrabhisheka, Vedaparayana, etc. The function was attended by a select audience of about three hundred men and women.

At Delhi

On 20th April 1969 Gurupuja was celebrated at 27, Meena Bagh. After Vedaparayana, Prof. K. Swaminathan spoke on the modernity of Bhagavan's teaching, which never contradicted reason and commonsense. The manner of his



Aradhana at Delhi: Among others were Sri A. R. Natarajan, left front, and Prof. Swaminathan, seated to the right of the picture.

passing after prolonged suffering reminded his devotees that flesh must go the way of flesh and what is born must die. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Smt. Neela Mahalingam and others rendered songs composed by Bhagavan, Muruganar and Sadhu Om.

At Chingleput

The nineteenth Maha Nirvana day of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated by Anbu Thondu Nilayam on 14th April 1969. There was abishekam in the Sri Sivanandiswari Sri Ramana temple. A large number of poor persons were also supplied with food in commemoration of the day.

MAHAPUJA

At the Ashram

Mahapuja or the anniversary of the passing away of Sri Bhagavan's mother was celebrated on 8th June 1969. Special pujas were conducted at the shrine of Sri Matrubhuteswara, as usual, and the devotees were treated to a special lunch.

At Ramana Kendra, Delhi

On 1st June 1969 the Kendra celebrated Matrubhuteswara Puja or Mother's Day in 20/19, Lodi Colony. After Vedaparayana and chanting of Upadesa Undiyar Brahmasri M. R. Nagasubramanyan spoke at length on the exaltation of motherhood in Hindu thought and Professor K. Swaminathan on the unique combination of *jyoti* and *Karuna*, of jnana and mother-love, in Bhagavan's human life divine. After singing of Tamil and Sanskrit songs and distribution of prasad the gathering dispersed.

* * *

Besides the weekly *satsanghs* held on all Sundays in various parts of Delhi from Nanakpura to Karol Bagh, the Kendra held the following special meetings:

Sankara Jayanti was celebrated on 27th April at M. 9, Netaji Nagar. Shri K. C. Subbiah and others spoke on the life and philosophy of the Bhagavadpada.

On 16th May 1969 at M. 11, Observatory Quarters, Brahmasri Vazhuthur Rajagopala Sarma spoke on Dakshinamurti. Quoting profusely from the Upanishads and Sankara, he explained the significance of *chinmudra*, the dissociation of the *jivatma* from all triads and its union with the *paramatma*. The meeting ended with the singing of "Arunachala Siva" and Arati.

A GIFT

Srimati Varalakshmi, wife of Sri M. Chiranjeevi Rao, Agent, The Life Insurance Corporation



The *Kireetam*

of India, Salur, Srikakulam Dt., Andhra Pradesh, presented a beautiful gold and gemset *Kireetam*

or crown to be placed on the linga over Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi on important occasions. It was used for the first time on 2nd May, 1969, in the presence of the donor and her husband and a large number of devotees. The Ashram is grateful to Srimati Varalakshmi for her magnificent gift.

HAPPY MOMENTS

Sri A. Devaraja Mudaliar, an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan about whom we published a brief note in our January 1966 issue, paid a short visit to the Ashram towards the end of April. He addressed the inmates and visitors on two days and explained the significance of certain events in Sri Bhagavan's life.

VISITORS

Mrs. Barbara Rose was again in our midst for a fortnight before leaving for U.S.A. to join her husband after completing her work at Kathmandu. The Ashram has agreed, at her request, to construct a house behind the Morvi Guest House in which she can live whenever she wishes to do so. The house which is to be named RAMANA SHANTI will at all other times be available for the accommodation of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan. We wish her bon voyage and a speedy return.

* * *

Miss Jane Hiroko Nishi to whom a reference was made in our April issue came again and stayed with us for a fortnight. She writes:

"After my first 'Pradakshina' it occurred to me that Arunachala was like God's own rock-garden. Every angle revealing another aspect of its Reality and retaining that same Reality, whether Its rocks should be bared to the winds or clothed in grass. And as a rock garden in the Zen tradition can be seen as a personal 'ko-an' which is both an embodiment and a revealer of Truth as conceived by its designer, so also the Hill could be regarded as an embodiment of Siva, Its 'ko-an' being, of course, the insurpassable, 'Who am I?'.

But as my mind rambled on in its ever-rambling fashion, I knew that this was only my way of trying to describe something very special which one can only experience. Truly God has been called the 'Master Physician', for here He draws out the tocsins of the spirit and releases them into the accepting, the healing and the loving airs of Arunachala. Spiritually Bhagavan's grace is limited only by the size of the believer's cup. .....

I first came to Arunachala several months ago, prepared in my own small way by reading some of Bhagavan's teachings, but largely through the enthusiastic promptings of a dear friend in Japan. It is only now, after many more 'promptings', both inner and outer, (for I tend to be rather hard of hearing at times) that I realize my incredible good fortune. Who can say when the subtle atmosphere of Arunachala takes hold of one's heart and instantly one begins to associate with a name, a place, the Blessings of God."

* * *

Mr. Horst Rutskowski, Mr. John Dawson, Miss Jacqueline Le Prince, and Miss Yvonne Dauguet continue to stay with us and attend to their spiritual sadhana.

* * *

There were a number of new visitors from abroad, but most of them stayed only for very short periods. Those who made somewhat longer stays are mentioned below.

Miss Julia L. Willings (U.S.A.) 2 weeks.
Mr. Aditya Rider (U.S.A.) 20 days.
Mrs. Sarama Rider (U.S.A.) 20 days.
Mr. John Kooyman (U.K.) 6 weeks.
Miss Valerie Freeman (U.S.A.) 3 months.

* * *

We publish below a letter of Miss Valerie Freeman who came here at the instance of Mrs. Barbara Rose, and stayed here for nearly three months, as it might be of interest to our readers.

"My introduction to Bhagavan came while living in Nepal and working as a Peace Corps Volunteer. After finishing my work there I came to the Ashram. The last few weeks in Nepal were anxious as I looked forward to visiting His abode and not knowing what to expect. The plan was to stay a couple of weeks and then to continue to travel slowly back to America. After being here only a short time my desire to 'see the world' disappeared and was replaced with the desire to stay here and be quiet.



Miss Valerie Freeman

"By Bhagavan's grace, which is endless, my stay at the Ashram has been lovely and with fulfilment beyond expectation. Unaware as I was

it is now clear that Arunachala is what I've been in search of for some time. It is a place like no other! There are feelings that cannot be spoken of or expressed; this is the place of those feelings."

* * *

Sri Swami Atmananda of Jnanashram, Parlikad, Kerala, accompanied by a party of students from abroad practising yoga at Ananda Ashrama, Pondicherry, visited the Ashram on their way back from Parlikad after attending a 'Spiritual Retreat' there.

OBITUARY

Sri Janaki Matha, a well-known mystic and devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on 27th April 1969 at Janaky Nilayam, her residence at Tanjore. She had been ailing for some time, but we did not know that her end was so near. She was born in 1906 in a small village near Palghat in Kerala and was married to Dr. C. S. Ganapathy Iyer, a Medical Officer under



Sri Janaki Matha

the Government of Madras. From her childhood she was attracted to a religious way of life and, as she grew up, began to have ecstatic visions of the various gods and goddesses whom she worshipped. Persons who were drawn to her by her mystic qualities often saw in her the gods whom they worshipped. In spite of her visions and mystic experiences Sri Janaki Matha was not quite satisfied. She felt that she should have a living Guru before she could attain Liberation. She was in due course mysteriously directed to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi whom she met for the first time in 1935. The moment she saw Him she felt that He was the Guru whom she was seeking. Thereafter she continued to visit the Ashram frequently until Sri Bhagavan attained Mahanirvana. Although she desired to come and stay permanently with Sri Bhagavan, He did not encourage her to do so and therefore she continued to live with her husband and children. A small band of devotees gradually gathered round her and most of them looked upon her as their Guru.

We invite in this connection the attention of our readers to an article which we published in the January 1966 issue of *The Mountain Path* which contains a fuller account of her spiritual experiences. More information is available in her biography published by Sri Janaky Nilayam, Tanjore, on the occasion of her sixty first birthday in 1966.

* * *

Sri G. Venkatarajulu Venkata Subba Rao of Guntur, one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on 16th April 1969. A lawyer by profession he was first drawn to Sri Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni whom he approached for consolation after the unexpected death of his young wife. Like the Muni he also soon became a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He used to visit Him even in His Skandashram days. His sense of humility was so great that he often went out begging his food in the Town and lived in a small thatched hut in Palakkottu. Subsequently he stayed in the Ashram for some years. An expert in astrology he predicted accurately the date of Sri Bhagavan's Mahanirvana.

* * *

Mr. Richard Clancy, Englishman and author, was attracted to Sri Bhagavan by reading some books containing His teachings. He had an irresistible urge to come to India and visit the Ashram. Although he was very old and suffering from advanced cancer of the spine he undertook a journey from London to Madras. He could not ordinarily sit up even for half an hour at a time, but, to his great surprise, he was not only able to fly such a long distance, but was also able to drive in a taxi from Madras to Tiruvannamalai, a distance of nearly one hundred and twenty miles. He attributed this to Sri Bhagavan's grace.



Mr. Richard Clancy

He stayed at the Ashram for nearly five months. He once said that here he got the confirmation of the Advaitic experience about which he had read. He was thoroughly reluctant to leave the Ashram, but his illness made it absolutely necessary for him to return to England. He was therefore put on a plane for London from Madras by our well-known devotee Hugo Maier. After an unexpectedly comfortable journey he arrived in London and was immediately admitted into the Chelsea Hospital, where, unfortunately, he passed away on 27th May 1969, two days after his arrival. As one of his friends wrote, he had done what he had always wanted to do and therefore 'relaxed and let himself go, having no more to struggle for.' The following note left by him before his departure shows his devotion to Sri Bhagavan and the Ashram.

"I first came to know of Sri Bhagavan through the publication in England of his works. Paul Brunton's account of the Ashram helped. This was about 1963. At that time I had been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi to direct my life on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount which he taught me to take literally as truth.

It was not until later that the absolute necessity of coming to the Ashram became apparent. I wrote to Arthur Osborne accordingly in 1967. He gave me very helpful advice, but explained that it was ultimately for Sri Bhagavan to decide whether I should visit the Ashram or not, and he left this for me to make sure of.

It is not possible to convey in words the spiritual experience of a visit to the Ashram. Apart from this difficulty of words, each visitor will form his individual impression. All I can do here is to record that no previous conception from books or other accounts can give a shadow of an idea of the strong spiritual force which pervades everywhere around me. It must be experienced by each one.

Everything possible is done by those responsible for the management to preserve the founder's spirit. That spirit of love is daily in evidence among the devotees and European visitors. It must be understood this involves discarding Western customs and the acceptance of the spirit which animates the Ashram and all who come here. Western people must be prepared to give up their accustomed standards of all kinds. There is no attempt to provide anything in the nature of a Western hotel with its physical amenities. A few concessions are made to help Western people in the matter of diet, but vegetarian diet is maintained."

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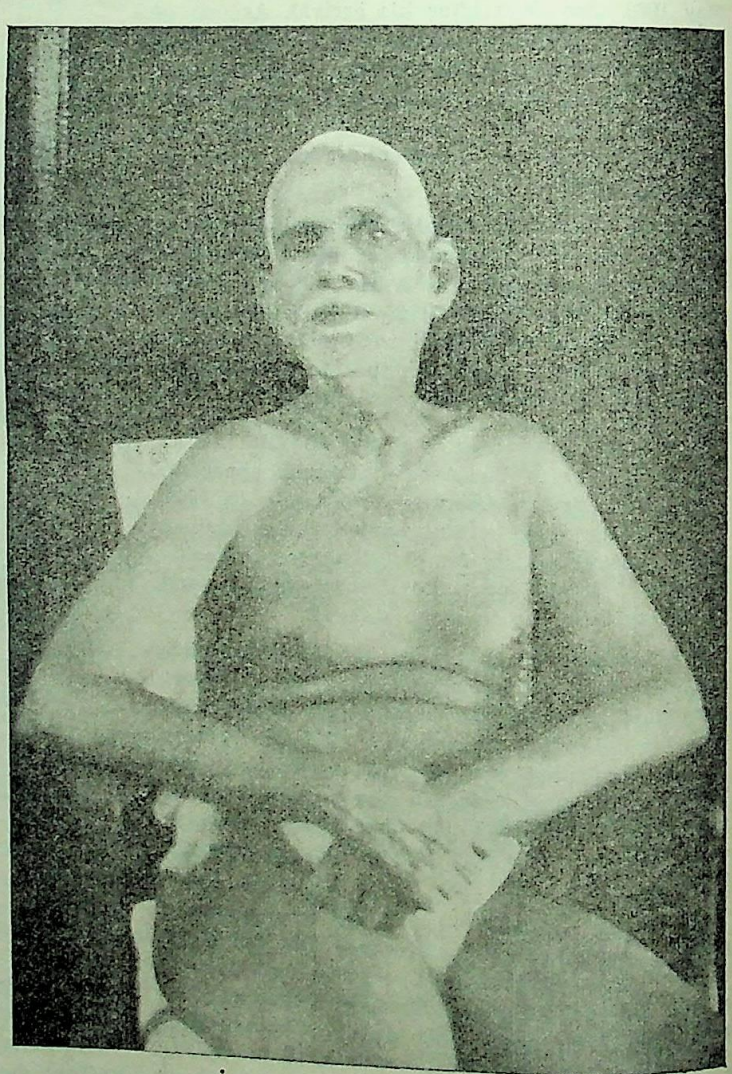
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INTRODUCING.....

S. DORAISWAMY AIYAR

ONE of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, who is still happily with us, is SRI S. DORAISWAMY AIYAR, whom we know from the early days of Sri Bhagavan's abode on the Hill, Arunachala. He was one of a band of aspiring young men who had the good fortune to be introduced into Sri Bhagavan's presence, by association with the great poet and savant, Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastrigal, around whom they were gathered.



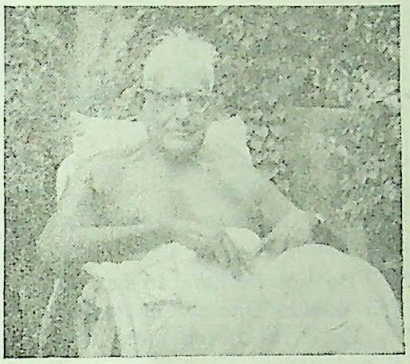
Born in poor circumstances, he evidently inherited the noble traditions of his ancestors, in particular their love of music and aspirations for great achievements, as became manifest even in his early life. After a brilliant scholastic career, despite great odds, he entered into the legal profession, made his mark very soon, and later rose to great eminence by virtue of his sterling qualities of heart and mind. His innate nationalism and intense interest in matters political, social and religious, brought him into close and greatly cherished association with such dynamic personalities as Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastrigal and Sri Aurobindo. The historic association of Sri Ganapathi Sastrigal with Sri Bhagavan in those early days on the Hill and the grace gained, drew him and those with him, ever more and more to Sri Bhagavan's presence. Thereafter Sri Doraiswamy Aiyar had many opportunities of visiting Sri Bhagavan with devotional freedom and ease, gaining much by His uplifting influence.

In his endeavour to gain the association and guidance of the great he shirked no difficulty or sacrifice and has thus known and moved with many spiritual personages and eminent personalities known in our times. His dominant interest amidst all pre-occupations seemed to be the search for Truth underlying spiritual life.

During the period 1931 and 1938 he had in this regard, still more opportunities of frequently visiting Sri Bhagavan, whose life and example was in itself a permeating influence, inculcating the essence of all Vedantic teaching in practice. That was the time when some persons chose to cause annoyance to the Ashram by indulging in speculative litigation and Sri Doraiswamy Aiyar as an act of devoted service attended to the same till its successful conclusion, doing everything needed to prevent such recurrence. To him and to those with whom he worked, this activity afforded valued opportunities of meeting Sri Bhagavan frequently and at the same time

receiving guidance and grace in their spiritual struggles.

Over the years the desire grew in him to give up all active work so as to devote all his time to sadhana. Thus he retired from his profession in 1938 without a second thought and settled down



Sri S. Doraiswamy Aiyar

in the Ashram at Pondicherry, visiting Sri Bhagavan as often as he could.

Perhaps the most intimate period of his close associations with Sri Bhagavan was in 1948 and onward. An illness that started as a small negligible tumour ultimately turned fatal resulting in Sri Bhagavan's Mahanirvana in April, 1950. During these two years Sri Doraiswamy Aiyar remained permanently with Sri Bhagavan, rendering personal service. During those days of stress and anxiety to one and all, he stood close to Sri Bhagavan, vigilantly endeavouring to know what was needed and helping the work of the team of devoted medical men who to the last did all they could to alleviate the affliction. This opportune period of service and close association with Sri Bhagavan is treasured by him as a sign of Grace for all the practical knowledge and spiritual gain the events afforded him.

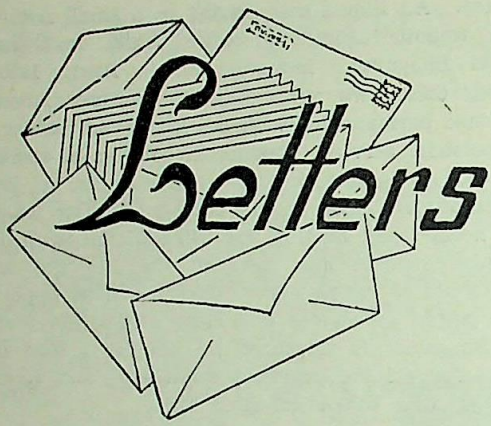
Having achieved and completely surrendered all that is coveted in the way of this world, Sri Doraiswamy Aiyar remains today totally detached from worldly concerns, his spiritual evolution alone marking any difference. Many consider it a privilege to know and associate with him.

He is now eighty-nine years old. Our affectionate thoughts and best wishes go to him, in Sri Bhagavan's Grace!

TO FREE ONESELF

Liberation is not to be achieved through endless cycles of time by reading the scriptures or worshipping the gods or by anything else than knowledge of the unity of Brahman and Atman. Wealth or actions made possible by wealth cannot produce the yearning for Liberation. Therefore the scriptures have rightly declared that action can never produce Liberation. In order to obtain Liberation one must heroically renounce even the very desire for the pleasures of this world. Then one must seek the Perfect Guru who is the embodiment of Peace and must concentrate one's mind and meditate ceaselessly on that into which one is initiated. Such meditation leads to abidance in the wisdom of the experience obtained. Embarking in that ship of wisdom, one must ferry over to the shore of Liberation that Self which is immersed in the ocean of *samsara*. Therefore the courageous aspirant should give up attachment to wife, sons and property and give up all activity. By so doing he should free himself from bondage to the cycle of birth and death and seek Liberation. Actions are prescribed only for purification of the mind, not for realization of the Self. Knowledge of the truth of the Self is obtained only by Self-enquiry and not by any number of actions.

—SANKARA in *Vivekachudamani*.



. . . . . to the EDITOR

THE PATH OF ENQUIRY

I

I am very interested in the Maharshi's teachings; how very fortunate those people were who could actually meet him! I have been reading your book 'The Path of Self-Knowledge' and found it very enlightening. Do you know if there is anyone in the Melbourne area who is conversant with the Maharshi's teachings? I am a member of the Theosophical Society, but have not met up with anyone yet who knows much about his teachings. Do you think one should just try and follow his path of self-enquiry on one's own? There are various yoga classes here but it is difficult to know which is the right one for you. I have been a seeker after Truth for many years and I think so far that the highest teachings I have come across have been Ramana Maharshi's. I was introduced to his works by someone I met in England, before I left there. He had been studying various Paths for years, and maintained that it was best to study the following before knowing the right one for yourself: Yoga, Mysticism, Krishnamurti and Zen. If you can give me any advice, I shall be grafeful.

MRS. SYLVIA J. BURTON,
Melbourne.

We do not know of anybody in Melbourne conversant with the Maharshi's teachings. How to follow the path of self-enquiry is clearly stated in the books about his teachings such as, for instance, THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI, THE TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI, SELF-ENQUIRY *and others. If one persists with the Self-enquiry of Who am I? without anticipating any reply the mind can give, a sort of vibration may come which will leave no doubt. One can also use self-enquiry to eliminate thoughts by asking one-self: "To whom has this thought arisen?" Do not hesitate to ask us for explanation if in doubt. One can always ask Bhagavan for help. He is the living inner Guru. He will never let you down..*

EDITOR.

* * *

II

Bhagavan Ramana is stated to have said that it took Him only 20 minutes to reach the absolute state by visualising the process of death. This became His permanent state. It appears to be that one important aspect is forgotten. In this birth He has attained the "SELF". This must be the result of strenous efforts of past births culminating in the bliss Eternal NOW. Otherwise it should be possible for most people, but this is far from the Truth. It is impossible even with the best of sadhanas to achieve the goal in one birth.

Bhagavan Ramana has said in the Instructions to Natanananda that 'Self-enquiry' is suitable for ripe souls only. This itself makes it clear that He had reached a highly advanced stage of realization. As you are advocating the method of self-enquiry even for a beginner as enunciated by Bhagavan, it seems to me however that we have to follow any one of the conventional methods like Japa etc. before one is ready to enter the path of Self-enquiry. A novice or a raw student therefore does not qualify for this instruction from the start. I do not know if I am correct. Could you explain?

S. ANANTHALWAR,
BOMBAY

Yes, attaining realization in a very short time in this birth may be the result of strenuous efforts in past births. Prolonged sadhana ripens the soul for self-realization. In this Kali Yuga the highest and most secret teaching has been thrown

open to all. You could quote Krishna who said when dying, that from now on adharma will prevail, but for those striving to attain God it will be much easier.

A beginner can use Self-enquiry together with other conventional methods which he finds helpful such as Japa etc.

EDITOR.

* * *

THE SPIRITUAL HEART

One day, when I was relaxing in a chair, I casually felt that I was not the body. Later, this awareness got deeply rooted in me. The aforesaid statement is not of a theoretical nature, but a real fact experienced by me. It so happens that whenever I contemplate on the 'I' of the working state, the 'I' gets automatically detached from the 'casing' and I am fully aware of it.

Further when my mind is inwardly directed the 'I' referred to earlier tends to sink into the spiritual Heart in me. When I go to bed it was often experienced that the 'I' gradually slips into the heart — of course with a balmy feeling — and soon I am well on my way to deep sleep; and thereafter nothing is known to me until I wake up again. A further development is noticed in me. That is, the area to the right side of my chest (in the region of the Heart) is always flushed with a certain feeling. I am unable to describe it. What would have been Bhagavan's remark if this letter was placed before Him?

D. SIVAPRAGASAM,
COLOMBO.

If your letter was placed before Bhagavan he most probably would have replied that so long as there is someone to be aware of something however sublime it may be it is not the true Self which is pure awareness. Sri Bhagavan said that the spiritual heart is on the right.

EDITOR.

* * *

ON MEDITATION

I would be extremely grateful if you could answer the following questions on behalf of a friend and myself.

(1) Does asking the question of 'Who am I' mean seeking for the source of the 'I' thought intuitively, or does it mean the asking of the question as a sort of reasoning process (like a Zen koan) only to be discarded later on when it is found to be no longer necessary? How does one know when to abandon the question?

(2) Could you tell me what is considered as the average allotment of time, to meditation, each day. We usually find 4-5 hours a day plenty (when we have the time to spare), but the author of *Maha Yoga* says 11 hours a day or more! Surely this is beyond the reach of most people today?

If you could answer these rather irritating doubts for both of us we will be very grateful.

H. G. BRAITHWAITE,
LONDON.

(1) Asking the question of "Who am I?" is not a reasoning process, nor does one anticipate a mental reply. If one persists with this quest with an intuitive concentration the reply may come as a sort of awareness dispelling all doubt. The source of the 'I' thought is the Self.

(2) One should meditate as much as one can without strain. Regular hours are helpful in the beginning. With time one can meditate even while working. The length of time without undue strain is up to you.

EDITOR.

* * *

MASTER'S LIVING PRESENCE

I have read most of the works Sri Ramana Maharshi authorised while alive, plus several articles in the *Mountain Path* journal, but am still puzzled over a few questions that come to mind. Is it true that Sri Ramana Maharshi's presence can still be felt at his ashram? Can he still meet and help others on a spiritual path, even though dead? I have for several years been searching for the answer to *who I am* (although it was not until this last year that I have actually formulated this question). In this regard I have been looking for an enlightened master to seek guidance, and, since I find Self Enquiry is so close to my natural inner searching, I would like to know if a trip to the ashram would be beneficial to me, i.e., can the Maharshi guide a newcomer? Also, is it necessary to go to the ashram itself or can I in some way evoke his help where I live (near Los Angeles, California).

In the last few weeks I have found several people who have been to the ashram, and have also seen Sathya Sai Baba, who seemed to impress them as the spiritual Master of this age. Since I know you too have met with him would you suggest that I seek Sai Baba as a spiritual guide (since I am told he plans to come to Southern California soon), or do you think a trip to India to the ashram would have a greater spiritual help to my inner journey. Please forgive my naivete on these matters. I hope I have not offended you

by my straightforwardness, but I feel that this is the only way to ask. I would very much appreciate your counsel in these matters.

RONALD B. MILLS,
U.S.A.

Yes, Sri Ramana Maharshi's presence can still be felt here at Arunachala and he still guides and helps devotees in various ways according to their needs as before.

"I am not going away, I am here", he said shortly before his Mahasamadhi and there are few who do not feel the radiance emanating from his presence here. A trip to the Ashram is always beneficial and nobody is a "newcomer" to the Maharshi. You can also evoke his help wherever you are. He will not fail a sincere sadhaka.

Since you are drawn to the path of self-enquiry which not many can follow, this in itself is a sign of his grace and it would be best for you to come to the Ashram, if you can manage it. This is the path of JNANA, *the simplest, the most direct and also the highest. In this age only Sri Ramana Maharshi teaches explicitly Self-enquiry.*

It is best to ask a question in a straightforward way, as you do.

EDITOR.

"Either see the mind's source so that it may disappear, or surrender yourself so that it may be struck down. Self-surrender is the same as Self-knowledge, and either of them necessarily implies self-control. The ego submits only when it recognises the Higher Power."

— SRI MAHARSHI.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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(A QUARTERLY)

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Grace in Words

விட்டுக் கருதலி றுறுநெய் வீழ்ச்சிபோல்
விட்டிடா துள்ளலே யுந்தீபற
விசேடமா முள்ளவே யுந்தீபற.
அனியமா வத்தி னவனக மாகு
மனனிய பாவமே யுந்தீபற
வனேத்தினு முத்தம முந்தீபற.
பாவ பலத்தினுற் பாவனை தீதகற்
பாவத் திருத்தலே யுந்தீபற
பரபத்தி தத்துவ முந்தீபற.
உதித்த விடத்தி லொடுங்கி யிருத்த
லுயர்கன்மம் பத்தியு முந்தீபற
லுயோக ஞானமு முந்தீபற.

7. *Better than spells of meditation*
Is one continuous current,
Steady as a stream,
Or downward flow of oil.

8. *Better than viewing Him as Other*
Indeed the noblest attitude of all,
Is to hold Him as the 'I' within,
The very 'I'.

9. *Abidance in pure being*
Transcending thought through love intense
Is the very essence
Of supreme devotion.

10. *Absorption in the heart of being,*
Whence we sprang,
Is the path of action, of devotion,
Of union and of knowledge.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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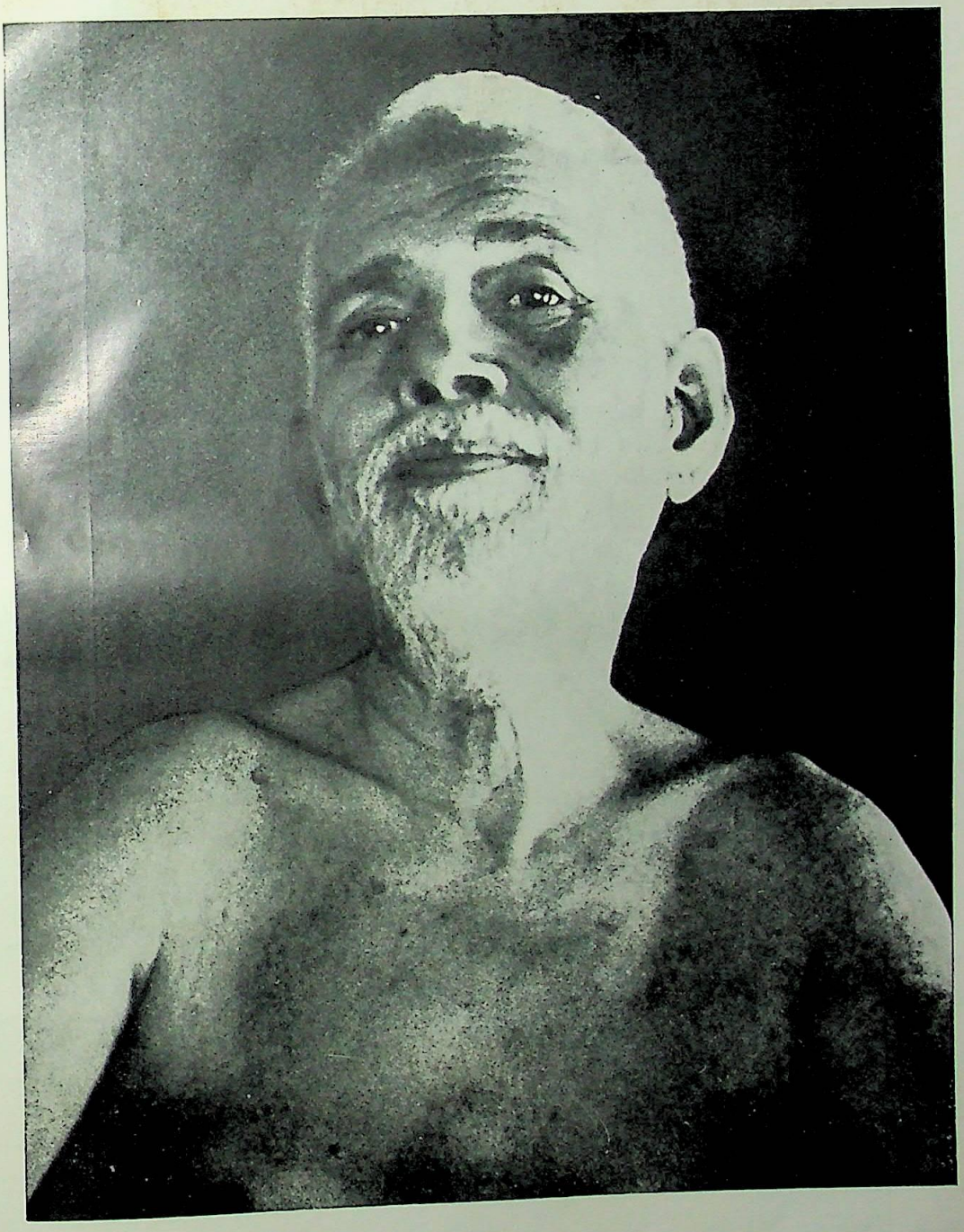
Of union and of knowledge
Is the path of action, of devotion.
Whence we spring
Absorption in the heart of being
Of supreme devotion.
The very essence
Transcending thought through love intense
But conscious pure being
Abidance in
The very 'I'.
Is to hold Him
Indeed the noblest attitude of all
Better than viewing Him as Other,
Or downward flow of oil.
Steady as a stream,
Is one continuous current,
Better than spells of meditation

7. Better than spells of meditation
Is one continuous current,
Steady as a stream,
Or downward flow of oil.

8. Better than viewing Him as Other,
Indeed the noblest attitude of all
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Transcending thought through love intense
Of supreme devotion.
The very essence
Absorption in the heart of being
Whence we spring
Is the path of action, of devotion
Of union and of knowledge.

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI





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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. VI OCTOBER, 1969 No. 4

ME AND THE WORLD

Editorial

WHAT do I know about myself and the world ? Directly, apart from what I read and am told, I know that I have certain senses — sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell — which report a body and a world outside it. Also I have a mental faculty to which they make the report.

Taking into account what I read and am told, I know also that their report is fallacious and that this outer world is only illusory, has only the reality that my perceptions mistakenly give it. The Sages have always told us this ; now physical science does too. If I see a hard, red ball I know that its redness is just the way that my optical apparatus reports vibrations of a certain frequency. If there is a bang when I hit it with a piece of wood that is just the way my ears report a vibration of another frequency. Similarly its roundness and hardness are qualities I endure it with. In reality (so far as there is any physical reality) it is just a cluster of atoms dashing about in empty space, by far the greater part of each single atom being itself empty space.

Furthermore, I am also assured by the ancient Sages and modern scientists that the whole endless variety of things is reducible to uniformity — call it prakriti, call it an energy-field.

Now, returning to observation of myself : my mind not only receives reports from the senses but passes judgement on them, dividing them up into pleasant and unpleasant, desirable and undesirable, and develops an urge to seek the former and avoid the latter. For instance, I find the smell of a rose pleasant and that of garlic unpleasant, and therefore I have an impulse to put a bowl of roses in the living room and shut the garlic up in an airtight tin. And I know that these reactions are mental because when I am asleep or under hypnosis they are not experienced.

I spoke of a mental faculty to which the senses make their fallacious reports, but what we call the mind is much more than that. It is an intelligence which looks upon itself as an individual being possessing the senses and utilising them as it chooses to

acquire what it likes and avoid what it dislikes and thus getting immersed in a turbulent sea of ambitions, hopes, fears, desires, regrets. This individual being that it imagines itself to be is just as illusory as the apparent world of solid objects that the senses report to it outside itself. When it is said that the Sage has no mind or has killed his mind it does not mean that he has no mental faculty. If he looks at a clock he can tell what time it is. In all ways his mental faculty functions as well as any one else's — or better for not being obstructed by the interests of an imaginary person.

Various techniques have been devised for exposing this imaginary person whom we call 'mind' or 'ego' — to deny it what it craves, to habituate it to what it dislikes, to shut off the senses and refuse to listen to their fallacious reports, to focus attention on Universal Being, how down to It, invoke It, to act according to duty or harmony, to accept whatever comes, other ways too. One can also try to do it directly : remain alert, watchful, but refuse to give directions to the senses ; step off the throne one has usurped ; refuse to let the mind be more than a mental faculty ; watch ; see what happens.

Perhaps it can't be done straight away, completely, continually, but gradually and for increasing periods it can. A peculiar vibration is felt, a sense of livingness both in body and mind, a sense of rightness, of divine content (which is a far higher state than divine discontent. Discontent with the false is a necessary impetus to seek the true ; content derives from recognition of the true.)

Perhaps one finds various powers and perceptions developing as the senses and faculties are freed from the stunting grip of the ego-mind. Then—and there is no perhaps about this—one finds the ego-mind slipping back into the driver's seat and trying to take control of them, use them, enjoy them. And so they are lost or spoilt. That is why the path goes in alternate waves of expansion and contraction. Constant alertness is needed. "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom" — freedom from the ego-mind : worldlings have made a catch-phrase out of what is a truth.

It is when the ego-mind is held in abeyance that powers flow through — different powers with different people according to their nature. But wanting them means the ego-mind is back again, which impedes them or vitiates them or makes them harmful to oneself and others. Christ said : "Of my own self I can do nothing." That is the necessary state — mind held in abeyance, power flowing through. That is why, when asked about Christ's miracles, Bhagavan said : "When he worked miracles do you think he thought he was doing it ?"

This aloofness from the mind has to be kept up constantly until the mind is not only in abeyance but dead. But will that happen ? Who asks that ? Who doubts that it will ? The ego-mind, the arch-hypocrite piously doubting its own death-sentence. Let it only be still. That is all that is required of it. The Universal Power will flow ; it only needs not to be obstructed. The Maharshi said : 'Submit to Me and I will strike down the mind." Call the Power 'God' or 'Self' or 'Christ' or 'Krishna' or 'Bhagavan', one only has to submit and stop interfering, planning, directing its course.

It sometimes happens that a person has an experience of pure being. He just is and feels the fact of being. Also he appreciates later that this is pure consciousness. Thoughts can be suspended, but even when they occur they do not interrupt the flow of consciousness. But he feels no bliss about it. It is not *Satchidananda* — Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This occurs to him as a sort of grievance. He feels that something must be wrong either with the teaching or himself. The explanation is that it is a case of the mind eavesdropping. Who feels no bliss ? I don't. But that 'I' has no business to be there at all. He is a mortal spying on the gods. Being not only feels bliss but is bliss ; only the absence of the reporter 'I' is a necessary condition for this.

MODERN IDOLATRIES

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

AN idol is not the same as an image. An image may be a symbol, that is a physical representation, whether lifelike or not, of non-physical being. 'Idol' is a pejorative term used by the followers of certain religions with the purpose of bringing other religions into contempt by suggesting that the images and symbols that they worship are not in fact symbols but idols that is to say objects to which independent reality and sanctity is attributed. That implies that there can be no hard and fast rule when an object is an idol and when it is not. When independent divinity is attributed to an object it is being treated as an idol; when that same object is used as a support to concentrate the devotion of the worshipper and canalise the Grace of God it is a symbol. Therefore to use the term 'idol' indiscriminately is tendentious.

However, the term 'idol' has come to be used in a wider connotation and need not necessarily imply an image or symbol; it can also mean a cause or idea. It is natural for man to give his allegiance to pure Being or a symbol of Being. When he ceases to do so he can either live for mere pleasure and convenience, like an animal, or switch his allegiance to some substitute; and this is idolatry, whether the substitute is in the form of an image or not.

The lowest kind of idolatry is the worship of some other human being, some Hitler or Stalin or Mao Tse Tung, because worship of the human degrades one to the subhuman level. This does not apply, of course, to a disciple's worship of his Guru, because it is not the human but the superhuman that he is worshipping in the Guru; he is not worshipping him as a man but as a manifestation of the Divine which he himself also manifests and a channel through which its Grace flows.

Nationalism is a powerful modern idolatry. Most men require some emotional attachment, and as religious attachment has faded out, first in the West and more recently in Eastern civilizations also, nationalism has grown up to take its place. It was unknown in the ancient world, practically unknown until the Reformation dissolved religious attachment in the modern West. What might look like nationalism in ancient times — in China, Japan, Israel, Egypt, for instance — was quite a different phenomenon: it was attachment to a civilization and way of life based on a religion. The Ancient Greeks felt a loyalty to their civilization, as many Europeans do to theirs to-day, but politically they were a group of warring states, as modern Europe is now. The Romans were a city-state that expanded into a bureaucratic empire. Devotion to a territorial unit within a wider civilization, devoid of any spiritual or profoundly cultural identity, such as a modern nation, is pure idolatry. It is acceptance of a worldly instead of a divine allegiance, and that is the very definition of idolatry.

In this case the emotional and materialistic aspects of allegiance outweigh the intellectual; intellectually the great modern idolatry is science. When some one says that science agrees with such and such a religious tenet the usual implication is that science is true and religion is to be accepted on sufferance so long as it does not disagree with it. That is to say that it is really science in which the speaker believes, not religion. It depends on the attitude of mind from which the statement is made. It is possible for some one who understands the Eternal Dharma to say that nuclear science is coming nearer to the Upanishadic teaching of primordial nature as formless substance or energy, meaning thereby that within its own domain (the domain of prakriti,

for Purusha is beyond it) science is correcting its former errors and penetrating farther than hitherto ; but more often such statements are an attempt to shelter religion, of which the speaker is not certain, behind science, of which he is or thinks he is.

Psychology is only one branch of science. It is becoming fashionable in the countries which used to be Christendom to go to one's psychiatrist as one used to go to one's father confessor to get one's problems in life straightened out and one's emotional scars healed. Both in theory and treatment psychology is replacing religion. Those who understand the ancient Guru-disciple tradition see that psychology is a truncated counterfeit of it. Just as physical science can attain only to prakriti without Purusha, so psychology can only to the subconscious without the superconscious. Some psychologists are indeed coming to suspect and some even to admit openly that there is a superconscious, but that is not enough. What is needed is to have access to it, to have traversed it in oneself and to be able to guide the aspirant in doing so. Treating patients on the psychological level without access to the spiritual may produce a superficial amelioration or an aggravation but can lead to no permanent cure. And yet when true reverence for a religious intermediary is lost idolatrous belief in a psychiatrist comes in its place. The late Dr. Jung, for instance, one of the most conciliatory of the famous scientists towards religion, declared that at the root of the trouble of all his patients of over middle age was lack of religion. He could observe this but he could not remedy it since he himself had no religious power or experience to draw upon. Indeed, the preface he wrote to Zimmer's German book on the Maharshi entitled 'Der Weg zum Selbst' shows woeful lack of understanding.

In the modern hall of idols art also has its place. People speak with superstitious awe of music, painting, poetry, regarding their creators as some sort of divine intermediaries. Where there is true reverence and humility they may indeed be, but not in the clamorous ego-assertive works of today. Traditionally the artist was often no different from the craftsman — not that art was less inspired but craftsmanship more. In some cases he was an ordinary workman who in the evening after his day's work repaired to the temple or cathedral to serve God in creating forms. In some he remained anonymous. Even when known and honoured, there was not the idolatrous glorification of to-day. Whereas in fact the spiritual authentication of art has been lost, the claim based upon it has been exaggerated beyond measure. An artist is spoken of as a specially dedicated sort of man, when often enough it is only his own fame or success that he is dedicated to ; apart from that he is simply a person with one type of ability more highly developed than in most people.

A similar claim is made for the scientist, the historian, the research scholar : an austere, passionate dedication to Truth. But here again there is a false attribution. The 'Truth' they seek is in fact seldom worthy of a capital letter, being for the most part merely factual. Spiritual Truth transmutes the nature of its seeker. To discover is to experience it ; to know is to be united with it. The truth of science and research, on the other hand, leaves a man the same narrow individual he was when he started, with the same faults and limitations. And when scientists are faced with some truth contrary to their presumptions, some display of unexplained powers, for instance, or some religious phenomenon, in few enough is the dedication to truth sufficient to make them admit it. The usual attitude is to look the other way and refrain from seeing it.

While the divinity of Truth is turned to an idolatry of science and learning, the divinity of Union is turned to an idolatry of sex. In film and fiction the union of man and woman is endlessly presented as the inspiration for effort and the sublime achievement. And, as with art, this idolatry goes hand in hand with actual degradation. As in art these two extremes survive when the true profundity based on divine symbolism has been lost.

There are other idolatries also in the modern world. Social service is one. Help

people who come one's way by all means, but to make a profession of helping them materially while neglecting both oneself and them spiritually is an idolatry. It is only a branch of the greater idolatry of humanism. The human is worthy of adoration, study, service, insofar as it reflects the divine, insofar as "in doing it unto one of the least of these ye do it also unto Me." The true bhakta serves men because he sees and serves God in them. Humanism is an attempt to deprive the human shadow of its divine substance and still find it worshipful.

Communism is not merely an idolatry but a complete idolatrous religion which will brook no other, no sharing of allegiance. That is why it condemns religion, nationalism, sex adulation, and regiments art and physchology.

But perhaps the most pervading idolatry of the modern world is its worship of itself. Just as the rootless individual of modern times is left with only himself to worship and becomes a natural egoist, so the modern world itself endlessly extols itself knowing nothing more stable or profound. The very word 'modern' has become adulation when it should be condemnation. To say that a thing is 'modern' is taken to mean that it is excellent, unencumbered, serviceable; in fact it means that it is meaningless, symbolising no higher reality.

Religion is not a department of life; life is a department of religion. If there were a true religious community, civilization including politics, art, education, marriage, learning, social organization, would be manifestations of it in the various departments of life. To make any of them independent and self-sufficient is to make it an idolatry. Our modern world is a world of idols, an idolatrous world. No individual can change this. Even the seeker must outwardly conform to it. What each person can do is to reject inwardly the sense of values that it implies and remember that, for himself, there is only the Self to be attained.

The Self, Ego and I

By

"Named Nameless One"

What is it?

FOR some time this bothered me—for when I read about these terms I used to think always of an individual, a Being; a Person or Thing. (Really, though, as Ananda Mayi Ma once stated: 'Everything is true from the standpoint it is said.') But getting back to what I was writing about — Who or What is the Ego, Self and/or I? To me, and my limited, finite mind, it seems that the ONE who is beyond and behind name and form and beings, assumes, for HIS play, names and forms, and THAT is ALL . . . All-pervading Oneness. So is not the Selfless ONE playing at being a Self, an Ego and an I? Hence, is not the Self — Selfless! the Ego — Egoless and the I — I-less; eternal, infinite and unlimited? To state so in writings might help to clear up any misunderstandings — I think. Then again, it might not. Wisdom and enlightenment come from the Highest. Silence is sometimes better.

Perhaps the Self, Ego and I spelled with capitals is all-pervading — like the air, ether, sky and space and without beginning or ending, and THAT which is without name.

THAT which is within is Beyond
Beyond is Within
Verily ONE is ALL and
ALL is ONE.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
SURYA PRAKASH

I COME from a family with spiritual leanings. My father was a great devotee of saints. I grew up under the influence of the profound, all-embracing Sindhu culture of pre-Partition days, which was a wonderful synthesis of the Hindu advaitic teachings, the highly devotional teachings of the Sikh Gurus and Muslim Sufi cult of complete Identity with the Divine. Although this rich heritage was destroyed while I was still young and I had to leave for other parts of India, the seed had already been sown.

It was about 1940 when I first read about Bhagavan Ramana in Paul Brunton's *Search in Secret India*. This aroused a vague desire in me to have darshan of him at some future date if it became conveniently possible, but no stronger impetus. After Independence and Partition I settled with my family in Bombay.

Late in 1948 I went with two others on a business trip to Bangalore. There one night the urge suddenly came to me, for no apparent reason, to go to Tiruvannamalai and have darshan of the Maharshi, since we were already so near. I raised the question with my friends, but they strongly opposed the idea of going to a jungle hermitage at the foot of some mountain (which was how they put it), so I too gave up the idea of coming. Somehow the matter came up again two days later. This time my friends relented but on the specific condition that we should not stay more than one day at the hermitage. I agreed.

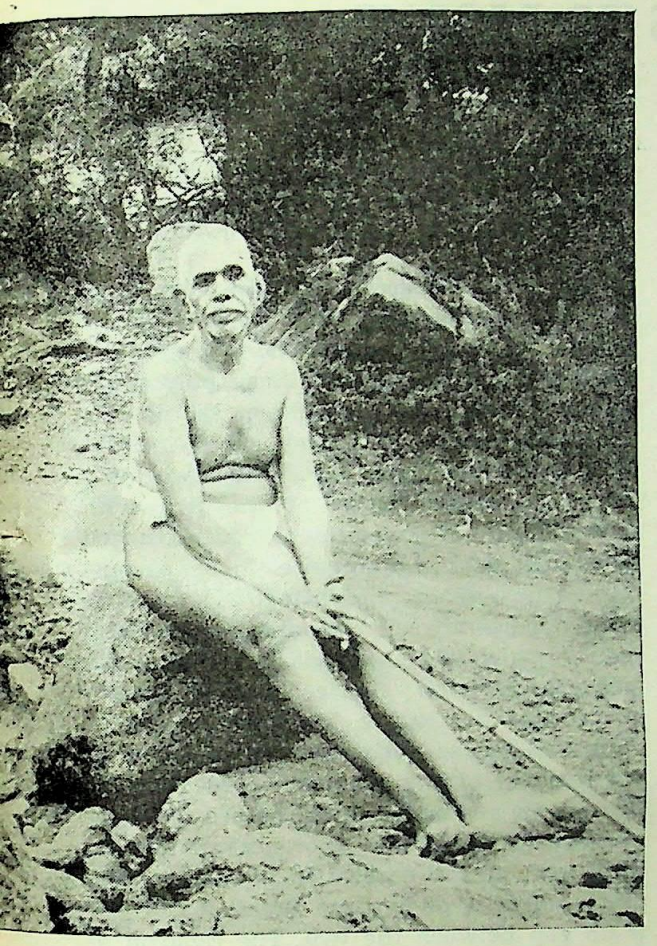
So we came. And we stayed for ten days. That in itself is commentary enough. Actually, when we did leave we had to tear ourselves away and it was only because we were refused a further extension of our stay. (Some readers may need to be reminded that the accommodation at Sri Ramanashram has mostly been built since the lifetime of the Maharshi. At that time there was very little accommodation for visitors.)

I may say that one of my two companions was a relative of mine, a well-to-do landlord of about sixty whose whole philosophy of life was to eat, drink and be merry. He had no spiritual leanings. The impact on him was tremendous. Why was he brought here ? Why are some chosen for Grace and others apparently not ? It is a mystery. He was so moved that he would bend down and touch my feet — an unheard-of thing from an elder to a junior — telling me that I had shown him God face to face in this very life. Soon after this he died, completely at peace with himself.

As for me, while sitting in Bhagavan's presence the first morning of my visit I was completely unaffected. In fact, during the lunch hour we were planning our departure next morning. But while I was sitting before Bhagavan in the afternoon something that I had never known before happened to me. In spite of myself I closed my eyes and, imperceptibly but without the slightest doubt, a sense of utter blessedness suffused my innermost being and for the first time in my life I had the experience of absolute and complete well-being. I have no better words to describe it. I was told later that Bhagavan was gazing intently at me during this time.

The spell was cast — for good.

I did not speak a single word with Bhagavan. It was not necessary. I read some of the Ashram publications. Much of his teaching was beyond me at that time. I did not even try to understand. Only I knew that I had perfect repose in myself. I had felt, had touched Divinity.



I came back in 1949. I was here again during the first week of April 1950, the last month of Bhagavan's life on earth. I have been three more times since he discarded the body, the present being my sixth and longest stay, of nearly two months.

With the passage of time I have tried to understand Bhagavan's teachings and, in my imperfect way, have followed the path of Self-enquiry taught by him. Side by side with it I have also followed the path of Nama-japa, calling on the Name. By the infinite Grace of Bhagavan, I have known that the deeps of peace and tranquillity are within me, indeed that I am That. Day after day I am becoming more sure of myself.

Finally let me mention a small incident. Towards the end of 1958 I visited the Ashram together with Miss Francoise Lamote, a Belgian lady who was at that time working with the United Nations. We came by car, she for the first time. As we approached Tiruvannamalai I was driving and I pointed out Arunachala to her from a distance. On looking at it, she had an upsurge of such emotion within her that she was almost speechless. After a few minutes all she could say was : "I feel as if I am going home."

Yes, it feels like one's home-coming each time one comes here. This time, however, I have prayed to Bhagavan to be with me everywhere and all the time, so that wherever I am Bhagavan is and I am always and everywhere 'at home'.

Thirty spokes unite in one nave ; the utility of the cart depends on the hollow centre in which the axle turns. Clay is moulded into a vessel ; the utility of the vessel depends on its hollow interior. Doors and windows are cut out in order to make a house ; the utility of the house depends on the empty spaces.

Thus while the existence of things may be good, it is the non-existent in them which makes them serviceable.

The Sage occupies himself with inaction and conveys instruction without words.

—PARADOXES from *Tao Te King*.

TO KNOW BRAHMAN IS TO BECOME BRAHMAN

By
M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

SO affirms the Sruti text (*Mundaka Upanishad* III. ii. 9): *sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati.* The *Taittiriya* text (II. i. 1) *Brahmavid apnoti param* reaffirms the same declaration. It means that the knower of Brahman attains the highest state. Strictly speaking there is no question of "becoming" as mentioned in the first statement or "attaining" as expressed in the second. We are constrained to use these words for want of anything better. Language, as it is found in everyday usage, suffers from very definite limitations. It is just a tool that we employ to express thoughts and ideas that are current in the practical concerns of life. It goes without saying that the highest mystical experiences are altogether beyond its grasp. The tools at its disposal can only make some kind of vague approximation to them. "Words are but broken light on the depths of the unspoken," said George Eliot. Spiritual experiences transcend the subject-object relationship. It is for this reason that the highest Reality, Brahman, is said to be beyond thought and word, "*yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*" (*Tait.* II. iv. 1). In the *Kena Upanishad* it is said that Brahman cannot be expressed by words or grasped by the mind but that it is the inner impulsion behind both speech and thought. Sensory experiences like seeing, hearing, smelling and the like imply a dualism, the distinction between the seer and the seen, the hearer and that which is heard, the one who smells and that which is smelled. Such dualism characterises all perceptual experience. Other modes of knowing such as inference also imply the distinction between the knower and the known. But how is knowledge in the usual sense of the term possible in the realm which transcends this dualism ? When it becomes necessary to put such mystical visions across for the benefit of ordinary people, the language that is in common usage will have to be employed for want of anything better. It can only make vague approximations to them. Words like 'becoming' and 'attaining' are not therefore to be taken literally. They are only figurative. The identity of the jiva with Brahman is an ever-present, ever-realized reality. It does not require to be accomplished or brought into being. All that has to be done is to realize an eternally existing reality which is concealed by fundamental ignorance. All our efforts are therefore to be directed not to the production of something which was not existent before but to the removal of the ignorance which stands between us and our essential nature. *Avidya-nivrithi* (removal of ignorance) automatically leads to the realization of *jiva-brahma aikya* (identity of jiva and Brahman). There is no gap between the two. The removal of the impediment means the ushering in of the state of enlightenment. There is no 'becoming' or 'attaining' involved in the process. It is like the appearance of the sun in the heavens as soon as the concealing cloud lifts. No special effort is necessary to make the sun shine. It is always there shining and the temporary concealment is due to the superimposition on it of an adventitious circumstance.

Or, we may liken the phenomenon to a man regaining his normal health as soon as his disease is removed by suitable treatment. The application of medicines is intended to remove the impediment and not to bring about or produce normal health. The latter is already there, only it has been obscured by the presence of an extraneous circumstance which may be quite accidental. The moment this superimposition is removed by

proper treatment, that very moment the patient gets whole and regains his normal state of health. This is no new attainment or new production. There is no 'becoming' involved here. It is only in a very loose sense that we can speak of the patient having attained something new. When the sick man becomes whole he gains nothing new.

Since the jiva is in essence Brahman we can understand the statement that he who knows the latter becomes that very reality. Ordinarily we do not become the things that we know. In the case of Brahman, knowing culminates in being, because the *jnata* or the jiva is in its innermost essence Brahman. The wrong notion that the finite self is something different from the Infinite Self has only to be dispelled for the realization of this identity to dawn on the former. The discovery is comparable to the finding of the tenth man in the party or the gold chain around one's own neck. The tenth man did not all of a sudden make his appearance from somewhere nor did the chain come from some other place where it lay concealed. Both were in the very place where they were later discovered, only we were not aware of their presence. We have discovered them only in the sense that we have removed the covering.

Strictly speaking all so-called new discoveries in the field of science are of this nature. They are not brought into existence afresh. They are already there, only they remain hidden from our view. When, for example, an astronomer discovers a new planet, what really happens is that he brings to light a heavenly body which was already there but of which we were not aware. When the adventitious circumstances which concealed it from our view are removed, the planet comes within the horizon of our knowledge and we hail it as a new discovery. But it is a discovery only in the sense of dispelling the cover of ignorance. Surely no astronomer will claim that he has created a new planet. All that we can legitimately claim to have achieved is to have brought to light a heavenly body hitherto concealed from our view. Scientists in general do not make discoveries in the sense of creating something which was not already existent. They simply remove the obscuring circumstances and make pre-existing realities reveal themselves.

Brahman-realization is also of this nature. Owing to beginningless ignorance, the jiva has come to look upon itself as finite, weak, feeble, ignorant, subject to joys and sorrows and to repeated births and deaths. Consequently it thinks of itself as distinct from Brahman. The sense of distinctness gives rise to the sense of the Ego which soon degenerates into egoism, selfishness, pride, arrogance, conceit and other evils. It finds itself confronted by innumerable other finite selves. It also becomes aware of a world outside which is the forum for all its activities.

The single reality, Brahman, which the Upanishad speaks of as the One without a second, breaks up owing to its association with Maya into Isvara, jiva and *prapancha* (world). The single jiva breaks up into many by the operation of the same principle of diversity. This is how we perceive variety and manifoldness where we ought to perceive the sole reality of Brahman. The Upanishads emphatically declare that there is no redemption for us so long as we perceive variety and manifoldness. If this variety and manifoldness were as real as Brahman they could never be dispelled by knowledge. So long as we perceive them, release remains an idle dream. But we are assured that if only we make the necessary effort we could get over the perception of diversity and realize our identity with the one and sole reality. Only what is unreal and what is in the nature of a superimposition on Brahman can be removed by right knowledge. We have therefore to assume that variety and manifoldness are not real but false creations arising from ignorance. Ignorance can be removed by right knowledge. When such knowledge arises all sense of variety and manifoldness vanishes as if by the waving of a magic wand and the finite self, casting off its finitude, rises to its true stature and shines as the Atman which

is only another name for Brahman. It is a case of dying to live. One has to die to his lower self to emerge as the higher Self.

This process of transformation is spoken of as '*samprasada*' in the Upanishad (*Chhandogya* VIII. xii. 37). "Thus does the Serene Being, rising out of this body and reaching the highest light, appear in his own form". The 'Serene Being' is the jiva. Through ignorance it had fallen into the cycle of birth and death. When it got rid of its ignorance through enlightenment, it came to realize its own true state, that it is no other than the Highest Brahman.

Sri Sankara explains the nature of this transformation more in detail in his commentary on *Vedanta Sutra* I. iii. 19. "The individuality of the individual persists so long as he does not eradicate his ignorance and does not know himself as 'I am Brahman', as the Self that knows no change, is eternal and a mere witness. But when the individual is roused from the assemblage of the body, senses, mind and intellect by the Upanishad which makes him understand 'you are not the assemblage of the body, senses, mind and intellect, nor are you a transmigratory being, you are that which is Truth, the Self of the nature of pure Consciousness,' then he realizes the Self that knows no change, is eternal, a mere witness by nature. Then that very individual rises above his identity with the body and the rest and realizes his true nature and shines as the unchanging, eternal, Pure Consciousness. This is declared in the passage: "Any one who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman indeed' (*Mundaka* III. ii. 9). It is a case of the finite self rising to its true stature and shining as the Atman by virtue of the enlightenment it has received from the contemplation of the *Mahavakyas* taught in the Upanishads.

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. This does not mean that there is a knower distinct from Brahman or that Brahman is an object in relation to a knowing subject. Brahman is the sole reality. It transcends the subject-object relationship. What the statement really means is that the finite self, by a process of analysis and elimination, knows itself properly and comes into its own. Discrimination shows that the adjuncts like body, senses, mind and intellect are in the nature of superimpositions on the real Self and when these are dispelled one realises one's true state.

In this process of analysis and elimination one may say that the finite self is both subject and object. The element of consciousness embedded in the finite self is the knowing subject and the material and subtle adjuncts are the object. The jiva is a complex of spirit and matter. The spiritual element in it is the knower and the adjuncts the object. When it dissociates itself from the body, senses, mind and intellect, it loses its finitude and the element of consciousness in it merges in its source. It is like the image of the sun reflected in pools of water getting back to the source when the waters dry up. Becoming Brahman is only a case of realizing the pre-existing identity between the jiva as a particular centre of consciousness with universal Consciousness.

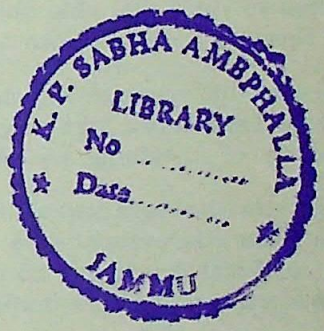
There is therefore neither bondage nor release in the real sense. Both terms are meaningful only from the empirical or *vyavaharika* standpoint. Sri Gaudapada has made this point clear in his *Mandukya Karika* II. 32.

"There is neither destruction nor creation; none is ever bound and none strives for release; there is no aspirant for release and none is ever released". The same idea is conveyed by Sri Sadasivendra Sarasvati in his *Atma Vidya Vilasa* (41): "Neither ignorance nor its removal has any relevance so far as I (the *jivanmukta*) am concerned even as darkness and its removal have no meaning to the dwellers in the sun. I am neither bound nor set free for I am eternally free and perfect."

In his commentary on the *Mundaka* text (III. ii. 9) Sri Sankara quotes the following statement: "*Anadhvagah adhvasu parayishnavah*". It means that some people reach

their destination without traversing the distance. This is possible only if the starting point and the destination are identical. One can remain where one is and at the same time claim to have reached the goal. To realize one's true nature there is no need to go somewhere, no need to become other than what one has been all the time. *Moksha* is neither something produced anew (*utpadya*) nor something to be attained by going to a different place (*apya*). It is not brought about by transformation (*vikarya*) or purification (*samskarya*). It is an ever accomplished reality and to realize it all that one has to do is to get rid of one's ignorance.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana gave special emphasis to this great truth of Advaita Vedanta by the method of self-enquiry (*atma vichara*). 'Know thyself' and herein lies the crown and consummation of life's purpose.



Destruction or Annihilation of the Mind (Mano-Nasa or Mano-Nigraha)

By
N. N. Rajan

A DEVOTEE once told Bhagavan that he was afraid of the loss of individuality, on the destruction of the mind.

Bhagavan immediately retorted: "Every day you go to sleep and say you enjoyed it well (happiness), wherein you lose your mind and still you are not afraid of sleep. But you say you will not survive after mano-nasa. Mind is only a bundle of thoughts and is not a physical organ. Absence of mind is absence of thoughts. By *vichara* the mind gets crystal pure and on development merges in the Self. The Supreme Consciousness, which manifests distinctly after the extinction of the mind is beyond ordinary human understanding. The individuality is supported by the Self which is a continuous process unrelated to the mind. Still a more real, perfect and enduring individuality bereft of the 'I-am-the-body' thought emerges after the destruction of the mind. Camphor is burnt without leaving a residue and so is the mind to be destroyed without a trace of ego. The mind appears only in the reflected light of the Self. When the original, Self, is realised why care for the shadow? The moon shines by the reflected light of the Sun. When the Sun shines, no one will feel the need for the moon. The Self rather takes charge of the mind and speech and directions for action spring forth as a flash direct from the Self (*sphurana*), which shines by Itself without any intermediary. Now there is no fabrication, confusion or distortion which is caused only by the mind. The Self alone remains and this is the natural state."

YOGA VASISHTA SARA[1]

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

Based on a translation made by SWAMI SURESANANDA

CHAPTER IV

DISSOLUTION OF THE MIND

1. Consciousness which is undivided imagines to itself desirable objects and runs after them. It is then known as the mind.

2. From this omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Lord arose, like ripples in water, the power of imagining separate objects.

3. Just as fire born out of wind (fanned into a flame) is extinguished by the same wind, so also that which is born of imagination is destroyed by imagination itself.

4. The mind has come into existence through this (imagination) on account of forgetfulness. Like the experience of one's own death in a dream ceases to exist when scrutinised.

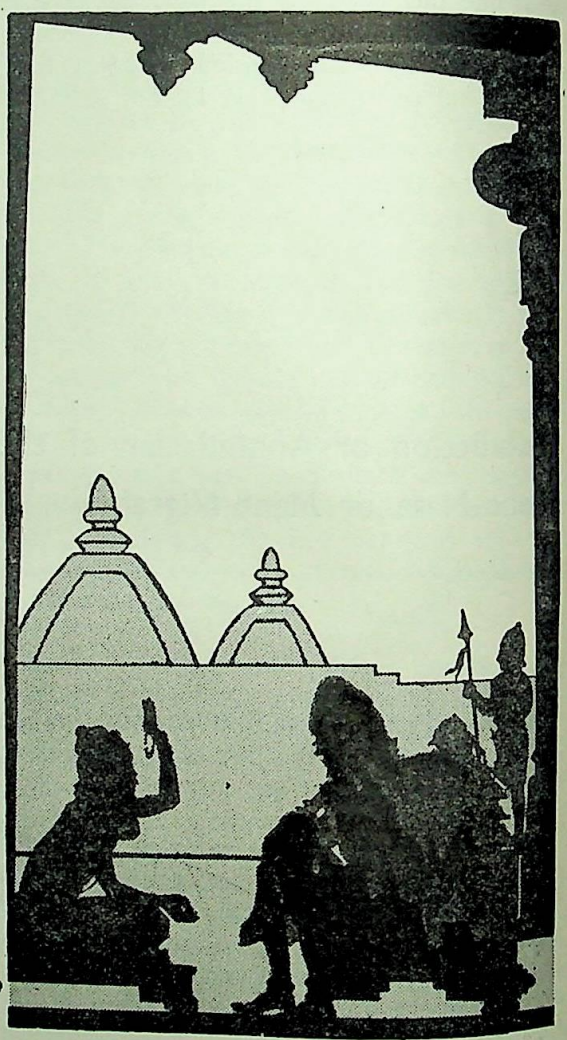
5. The ideas of Self in what is not the Self is due to incorrect understanding. The idea of reality in what is unreal, O Rama, know that to be the mind (*chittam*).

6. 'This is he', 'I am this', 'That is mine', such (ideas) constitute the mind ; it disappears when one ponders over these false ideas.

7. It is the nature of the mind to accept certain things and to reject others ; this is the bondage, nothing else.

8. The mind is the creator of the world ; the mind is the individual (*purusha*) ; only that which is done by the mind is regarded as done, not that which is done by the body. The arm with which one embraces the wife is the very arm with which one embraces the daughter.

9. The mind is the cause of (produces) the objects of perception. The three worlds



depend upon it. When it is dissolved the world is also dissolved. It is to be cured (purified) with effort.

10. The mind is bound by the latent impressions (*vasanas*). When there are no impressions it is free. Therefore, O Rama, bring about quickly, through discrimination, the state in which there are no impressions.

[1] Continued from our last issue.

11. Just as a streak of cloud stains (appears to stain) the moon or a blotch of ink a lime-plastered wall, so also the evil spirit of desire stains the inner man.

12. O Rama, he who, with inturned mind, offers all the three worlds, like dried grass, as an oblation in the fire of knowledge, becomes free from the illusions of the mind.

13. When one knows the real truth about acceptance and rejection and does not think of anything but abides in himself, abandoning everything, (his) mind does not come into existence.

14. The mind is terrible (*ghoram*) in the waking state, gentle (*santam*) in the dream state, dull (*mudham*) in deep sleep and dead when not in any of these three states.

15. Just as the powder of the *kataka* seed, after precipitating the dirt in water, becomes merged in the water, so also the mind (after removing all impressions) itself becomes merged (in the Self).

16. The mind is samsara ; the mind is also said to be bondage ; the body is activated by the mind just as a tree is shaken by the wind.

17. Conquer your mind first, by pressing the palm with the palm, grinding the teeth with the teeth and twisting the limbs with the limbs.

18. Does not the fool feel ashamed to move about in the world as he pleases and talk about meditation when he is not able to conquer even the mind ?

19. The only god to be conquered is the mind. Its conquest leads to the attainment of everything. Without its conquest all other efforts are fruitless.

20. To be unperturbed is the foundation of blessedness (*Sri*). One attains liberation by it. To human beings even the conquest of the three worlds, without the conquest of the mind, is as insignificant as a blade of grass.

21. Association with the wise, abandonment of latent impressions, self-enquiry, control of breathing — these are the means of conquering the mind.

22. To one who is shod with leather the earth is as good as covered with leather. Even so to the mind which is full (undivided) the world overflows with nectar.

23. The mind becomes bound by thinking 'I am not Brahman' ; it becomes completely released by thinking 'I am Brahman'.

24. When the mind is abandoned (dissolved) everything that is dual or single is dissolved. What remains after that is the Supreme Brahman, peaceful, eternal and free from misery.

25. There is nothing to equal the supreme joy felt by a person of pure mind who has attained the state of pure consciousness and overcome death.

Among mankind the recognition of beauty as such implies the idea of ugliness, and the recognition of good implies the idea of evil.

There is the same mutual relation between existence and non-existence ; between difficulty and ease in the matter of accomplishing ; between long and short in the matter of form ; between high and low in the matter of elevation ; between treble and bass in the matter of musical pitch ; between before and after in the matter of priority.

— PARADOXES from *Tao Te King*.

CONSCIOUSNESS

By
JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

THE word "consciousness" is one of the most important words in the message of The Infinite Way. True, it is probably the most difficult to understand, and you need not be surprised if it takes years and years to catch a glimpse of its meaning.

Consciousness is as difficult to define as is God, about which it is rightly said that if you can name It, It is not God. Any name that you would give to God, be assured, is not God. Even the name God Itself is not God, nor is Soul, Spirit, Principle, or Love. None of these is God: these are merely words describing God, as if God could be described. Actually, they are words revealing certain facets of God.

Love is certainly one of the aspects of God, and so are intelligence and law, but to say that any one of these is God would be to leave out the others. Even if all the synonyms known for God were summed up, you would still not have God, because God is infinite. If you knew a thousand more words about God, you would not have the allness of God. There is no way through words to attain an understanding of God that would be God. You can, however, experience God, but when you experience It, you cannot describe It.

There are thousands of stories in the world written about love, but nobody has ever been able to describe falling in love. Be assured that trying to reach God is more difficult than that. When you have come to an end of words, you will discover that there is *Something* that is not a word, but is your Self, and that is *I*. *I* is not a word: *I* is my Self. *I* am not a word: *I* am being.

When Moses attained the revelation of that *I Am*, he attained the experience that goes beyond words, because *I* is not a word: *I* is the being that I am. Therefore, with that word *I*, God is revealed, because there is no word behind *I*, nor in front of It. *I* is I; *I* am that *I*.

I am not projecting an image of thought when I say "*I*". I am announcing my Self. If I say "life", I myself am saying life. If I say "mind", I am saying mind. If I say "God", I am saying God. I am uttering words, but I is not a word: I is the individual uttering the words.

The Master did not give a new revelation to the world. He did not say anything at all that was unknown up to that time. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.[1] . . . I am the bread.'[2] The Master declared *I*, and therefore he could ultimately reveal that which Moses knew, that "I and my Father are one",[3] because *I Am* that one—not two, one; and that one *I*.

The Mystery of the Ages

As you study the mystical revelations of the world, whether of the Orient or the Occident, you will discover that *I* reveals God. All the mystical poetry of the world reveals God as *I*. Every time *I* is used, it is God announcing Itself.

When you say "I" about yourself, or when I say "I" about myself, the next question is: Who am I? What am I? Where am I? What is my function? This is the mystery; this is the mystery of the ages. So we search, but to our sense it is clear that you, as a person, are not God, and that I, as a person, am not God. What we know of ourselves with our mind certainly would not permit us to believe for a moment that that would be God.

So we say, "Ah! The mystery deepens. *I* is God, or else all the revelations of the world are wrong, but, as I know myself, I

[1] *John* 14 : 6.
[2] *John* 6 : 35.
[3] *John* 10 : 30.

definitely am not God. I know all my own weaknesses ; I know all my own faults ; so do not try to tell me that that which I know as Joel is God, because that is not even funny ! "

Therefore, I must go deeper, and eventually I discover that that which I have known as Joel and that which you know as Joel definitely is not God, but as a matter of fact, it is not *I* at all. That is some false idea that I am entertaining of my Self and that you are entertaining of me, but it is not my Self, because on examination I find areas of myself that need to be investigated further. I have not met those before. All I have met is what was in my mind and what was in my body, but now I am commencing to discover parts of myself that I never knew before.

Expanding Awareness

Eventually this led me to see that I am really not a body, because even without a body, I would be intact. But I am conscious of things ; I am conscious of a world about me ; and I can identify sun, moon, stars, earth, forms, human life, vegetable life, and animal life. Beyond all that, I am conscious of something else. I am conscious of thoughts, thoughts that do not concern things : thoughts of love, thoughts of benevolence, thoughts of charity, thoughts of fellowship, thoughts of fraternalness, brotherly love. These are not concrete physical forms ; they are an area beyond the physical. I am now conscious of something in the mental realm, something in the form of ideas and relationships.

At some moment or other, I become conscious of something called prayer. I do not mean the words and thoughts that go to make up prayer, I mean a feeling within me, a feeling that is a sort of reaching out, and then a feeling that responds, and all of a sudden I recognize it as communion. I and my Father are communing ; I am communing with the Father within me. I find myself with *Something* unidentifiable within — peaceful, sometimes joyous, freeing — and I recognize this as communion ; I recognize it as prayer or meditation.

So I now find myself conscious, not only of that which is in this physical realm and the thoughts or ideas of the mental realm, but now I am becoming conscious of a realm that is beyond things and thoughts, beyond that which I can see and can think. I have to ascribe to it the word " feeling ", but it is not feeling in the sense of touch. Therefore it must be feeling in the sense of awareness.

All that I have described in these few words ultimately led me to the revelation that I am consciousness, because all there is to me is being conscious of. Take that away from me, and I have no existence. Even if my body walked the earth, I would have no existence unless I were conscious of it. But if I am conscious only of a physical universe, I am an animal, and I am living on the animal level of life, aware of nothing but physicality in one form or another. This was the stage of some of our ancestors in the cave-dwelling, prehistoric days, and their state of consciousness, when man lived entirely by force and physical feelings.

The beginning of the mental era can be traced to that time when man began to discover science, mathematics, the building of roads, temples and pyramids. That was an evidence that the mind was opening and man was beginning to live as both a mental and physical being. He was a mental being living through the physical body ; he was a mental being erecting a physical universe, but with little or no awareness of anything beyond that. As far as he was concerned, all there was, was mind and matter, intelligence and form.

Let attachment to Him who has no attachment be your ONE attachment. That attachment will help you to free yourself from other attachments.

— *Tiruvalluvar.*

JALALU'L-DĪN RŪMĪ—MYSTICAL POET OF PERSIA

By
GLADYS de MEUTER

IT was in the year A.D. 1207 that Persia's nightingale of verse Jalalu'l-Dīn-Rūmī was born at Balkh, a city situated in the Northern province of Khorāsān.

In 1219, prior to the coming of the Mongols, Rūmī's father Baha'u'l-Dīn Walad left Balkh with his family. It is believed that they passed through Nishapur on their journey, where they met the saintly druggist-poet 'Attār who prophesied the future glory of twelve year old Rūmī.

Having travelled through Baghdad, Mecca and Damascus, the family settled at some distance from Konya, the Saljūq capital of Anatolia. There, Jalalu'l-Dīn Rūmī married, and was blessed with a son in 1226 whom he named Sultān Walad. Shortly after, a move was made to Konya where Rūmī's father, a theologian and preacher of repute continued to teach the path of tariqa to his disciples until his death in 1230. Ten years later his son Rūmī became shaikh, having drawn to himself a number of ardent followers.

In 1244, a simply clad dervish known as Shamsu'l-Dīn of Tabriz came to Konya, and in him Rūmī recognised his Master. The Sūfī ascetic was invited to share Rūmī's home where he remained a couple of years. Rūmī's disciples however, became resentful of their teacher's love for the wandering dervish, whom they proceeded to persecute bitterly.

Shamsu'l-Dīn of Tabriz left for Damascus. Sent by his father, Sultān Walad asked the holy man to return with him to Konya. The Master consented, and Rūmī's disciples were forgiven. But their jealousy, subdued for a time, again reared its head, and the disciples became so malignant in their attack on Shamsu'l-Dīn that he once more left for Damascus. Rūmī, unable to bear the separation from his Master, sent Sultan Walad to recall him. With great joy Rūmī welcomed Shamsu'l-Dīn a second time, but his happiness was shortlived. Again jealousy struck out at the holy man, and he disappeared, never to be seen again.

From the winter of this separation, emerged the blossoms of springtime in Rūmī's soul. Known as Maulānā, 'Our Master' to his disciples, Rūmī composed an exquisite collection of lyrical poems in the name of his Master. His Diwān-i-Shams-i Tabriz are the outpouring of his love for the Beloved — a love which Rūmī had found, for a brief period, embodied in the dervish stranger Shamsu'l-Dīn.

Rūmī's genius sparkles in his lyrical poetry, and in the Mathnawi, a vast work of rhyming couplets contained in six books, his deep wisdom is revealed. Regarded as Rūmī's most important work, the Mathnawi has been called 'The Quran of the Persian Language' and 'The Bible of the Sūfīs'.

Rūmī possesses the rare ability to present the gem of spirituality in the garb of simple homilies, legends and other tales, retaining meanwhile the purity of Sūfī doctrine — that of Wahdat-al-Wujūd 'the oneness of all existence.'

The Mevlevi Order of the 'Whirling Dervishes' was founded by Rūmī. The gyrating motion of the samā induces in the dancer intense fervour leading to an ecstatic state, while the reed-flute echoes the music of the inner heart which sends its love-call to the Beloved. Jalalu'l-Dīn Rūmī's poetry sounds this sacred song in tones of exquisite longing and pain ; yet within this anguish is contained the clarity and beauty of the nightingale's joy as it sings of love's fulfilment.

When Rūmī died in 1273, it was his beloved disciple Husāmu'l-Dīn Hasan who

succeeded him as Guide of the Mevlevi Order.

The mystic path is clearly defined in Rūmī's works, and he who is attuned may follow the nightingale's song as it leads him to the Rose-Garden.

As the pilgrim-soul sets foot upon the Path, a song is heard in the opening verses of the Mathnawi :

Who will give ear to the Song of the Reed ?
As it tells of the anguish of separation.
Of the heart's burning love and
urgent need
For the beloved Friend.
'Where is one with a wound like mine ?
That we may be united in agonised ecstasy.
Only the wise discern the sign
Of my heart's secret lament.
Love's sacred fire kindled the flame
within me,
Love's mystic wine was my inspiration.
If thou wilt know a lover's agony
Then hearken to the lonely Song of the
Reed.'

(Exiled from its celestial home, the soul which is rid of egoity, is filled with an ardent longing for the Beloved. The plaintive music of the Persian reed-flute, used during ceremonies of the Mevlevi Order, expresses the soul's yearning for divine union).

* * *

'A nightingale took leave of this place,
and then returned :
to make captive these spiritual truths,
it had become a falcon.'
(*Mathnawi* 12-13).

(The Master, nightingale of the heavenly spheres, comes to earth in order to diffuse the attar of spiritual knowledge).

* * *

'When suffering from aloneness, you
despair,
seek the shadow of a friend of the Sun.'
(*Mathnawi* 30).

(Afflicted with heart-loneliness, the aspirant must seek the help and advice of a spiritual guide who is a Friend of the Sun of Truth).

* * *

'In your adversities and tribulations,
the friend is the mirror
of your soul : Breathe not on the surface
of this mirror, O soul !
In order that the mirror veil not its face
under your breath,
You must at all times retain your breath.'
(*Mathnawi* 40-42).

(Endowed with the eyes of spirit the Master sees clearly the aspirant's heart-state. The Teacher is therefore able to give true guidance to the truth-seeker who is taught to abstain from ignorant speech, and embrace the Silence).

* * *

'Are you less than a clod of earth ?
When a clod of earth discovers a friend,
that is,
the spring, it benefits from a hundred
thousand flowers
The tree if it enjoys the companionship
of a friend,
the pleasant breezes, will be bedecked
with blossoms.
When it discovers a false friend in the
autumn,
it hides its head and face from view.'
(*Mathnawi* 43-44).

(Surrender to the Master is necessary if the latent spiritual blossoms in the heart of the aspirant are to unfold. Association with wrong friends are an impediment to spiritual development, and it is unwise of the aspirant to reveal to the ignorant the secrets of his heart-soul).

* * *

'When the mirror, the heart, attains
gleaming clarity,
You will behold pictures within it
other than
those of water and clay.
You will behold both the pictures and
the Painter.'
(*Mathnawi* 85-86)

(To the purified heart will be revealed the spiritual world in its pristine beauty).

* * *

'Learn that the outer form passes away,
and that the world of spirituality endures.
How long will you form loving attachment with
the visible object, the jug ?
Turn away from the visible object, the jug, go in search of water.'
(*Mathnawi* 620).

(Instead of preoccupying himself with externals, the aspirant is bidden devote himself to the inner Reality).

* * *

'Sorrow and tears are needed for penitence :
Lightning and rain are required for penitence...
Fire and water are necessary for bringing forth fruit :
Rain and lightning are needed for this work.
Until the advent of the lightning of the heart and the rain of the two eyes, how can the fire of divine anger be soothed ?
How can the greenness, the joy of union with the Beloved grow ?
How can springs gush forth crystal-clear water ?
How can the flower-beds reveal their secrets to the green plain ?
How can the violet make peace with the jasmine ?
How can a plane-tree unfurl its leaves in prayer ?
How can a tree sway its crown in Love's breeze ?
How can the flowers in the days of spring, begin to throw out sleeves laden with offerings ?
How can the tulip's face flame like blood ?
How can the rose bring forth gold from its pockets ?
How can the earth manifest its heart's secrets ?
How can the garden be illumined like the heavens ?'
(*Mathnawi* 1083-1095).

(When through the purifying fires of penitence, tears of sorrow and remorse are shed, an ardent love for the Beloved is kindled in the truth-seeker's heart, and he is led to enjoy the fruit of divine knowledge where he receives awareness of the divine Unity).

* * *

Close thy worldly carnal ear which hinders
Thy conscience and deafens thine inner ear.
Remain without ear, sense and thought,
Concern thyself solely with the divine call : 'Return',
Although speech and action are the outer mode of our journey,
The inner pilgrimage is a celestial one.
While the physical travels along the dusty way,
The spirit moves above the waters, like Jesus.'
(*Mathnawi* I 566).

(While performing the tasks assigned to him on this earth, the aspirant must nevertheless keep his mind firmly fixed on his true spiritual home).

* * *

'When did I grow less by dying ?
As man I shall die to put on the wings of angel-hood :
Yet even from the angelsphere I must press onwards.
All things perish save the Beloved.
When I have relinquished my angel-soul
I shall become beyond the mind's imagining.
Oh, let me become naught, for the song peals forth :
'Unto Him do we return !'
(*Mathnawi* III — 3901).

(Having partaken of the 'cup of intoxication', the mystic is filled with an ecstatic yearning for at-one-ment with the Beloved).

* * *

Stories from the Mathnawi

The Companion who said 'I'

Once, a man rapped at the door of his friend who enquired 'Who is it ?'
He replied : 'I'.

His friend told him : 'Take your leave. You have come too early. There is no place at my table for the immature, and how can this be remedied but by staying away until all hypocrisy is gone.'

With sadness weighing heavily upon him, the man turned away, and surrendered to the fire of separation for one year. Then he returned, and nervously approached his friend's home.

With trepidation and reverence, he knocked at the door.

'Who is it ?' asked his friend.

He replied : 'It is Thou, O beguiler of hearts.'

His friend said : 'Now that thou art I, enter, in this house there is no place for two I's.

The needle cannot accept a double thread : enter the needle since thou art single.'

It is the thread that must perforce enter the needle : no camel may pass through the needle's eye.

And how shall the camel be brought down to size save by self-denial ?

* * *

Moses and the Shepherd

It happened one day that Moses came upon a shepherd boy who was praying in this vein :

'O God, where art Thou, that I may become Thy slave ; that I may make Thee shoes and comb Thy hair....'

'To whom are you addressing these words ?' enquired Moses.

'To the Worshipful One Who created us,' answered the shepherd boy.

Moses rebuked the lad, telling him that his words were foolish babbling whereupon the shepherd boy went away heartsore.

Shortly after, the inner Voice communed with Moses :

'Thou hast put My servant from Me.

Thou hast been sent as a prophet to unite, not to sever....

Worship ordained by Me is not for My benefit, but is a kindness conferred upon My subjects....

I look beyond the utterance of words and see the state of the soul,

I seek ardent love ! Strive to possess this ardour !

Kindle a flame of love within you and consume thought utterly.

Love is a religion apart from all others.

Those who are lovers of God, possess no religion but God alone !' Thus enlightened, Moses went in search of the shepherd.

When he caught up with him, Moses told him that he was free to worship in his own fashion.

The prophet said : 'Let your heart dictate your prayer.'

* * *

The Disciple who built a new abode

A devotee who was yet a novice, had just completed building himself a new abode.

His spiritual Guide came to view the house, and wishing to test the novice, asked : 'Friend, what was your object in making a window ?'

The other answered : 'So that the light might enter therein.'

The holy Guide told him : 'That is not the main purpose. It should have been that the call to prayer reach you through this aperture.'

A Snake-catcher robs another Snake-catcher of a Snake

A snake-catcher was robbed of a snake by a petty thief who in his ignorance, thought he had profited by this act.

The snake-catcher escaped injury when the thief suffered snake-bite.

The snake-catcher came upon him, and recognising him, said to himself : 'My snake has killed him — I had prayed that I should find this thief and recover my snake. In His wisdom God rejected my prayer. Because my prayer remained unanswered I considered this a loss, but it turned out that I benefited from it.

There are many prayers which, if answered, would prove to be a calamity—but

God, the Spotless One, in His compassion does not hear them.

* * *

FROM : *The Divani Shamsi Tabriz of Rumi*

Tarry not here ! In thy celestial home
Thou shalt grow the wings of an angel.
Press onwards ! give thyself to the vast Ocean,
So that thy tiny drop make oceans great in number.
'The Son of God !' leave that word unuttered,
Say rather, 'God is One, the Spotless, the only Truth.'
What matter if thy frame be wizened, aged and dead,
If the soul retain her unfaded, everlasting youth ?

* * *

Enthroned in the palace, we share a glorious moment
Thou and I.
Endowed with two bodies and two shapes, yet with one soul,
Thou and I.
The hues of the glade and birdsong will confer deathlessness
The moment we enter the garden,
Thou and I.
The heavenly orbs will come to behold us ;
We will display the moon to them,
Thou and I.
Our individualities lost, we shall be merged in bliss,
Thou and I.
Overjoyed and freed from ignorant talk,
Thou and I.
The birds of heaven in gay plumage will be envious
Of the spot where we shall know laughter,
Thou and I.
Yet the greatest marvel is that while sharing this same corner,
Thou and I.
We are at the same time in Irāq and Khorāsān,
Thou and I.

* * *

Thou art the shelter of my soul in time of sorrow,
Thou art my spirit's jewel in the harshness of death !
That which is beyond the reach of imagination,
Beyond the vision of understanding.
Brings tidings to my soul from Thee,
Therefore to Thee do I turn,
By Thy Grace, my gaze is turned towards the timeless,
Except, O Regal One, should worldly tinsel ensnare me.

* * *

Why reside in musty cell, a prisoner, O my heart ?
Hasten thy flight ! a radiant being of yonder world thou art.
Upon His bosom He bids thee rest, He casts the veil aside :
Why in this home of corruption must thou abide ?
Gaze upon thy true home, free thyself and fly
From this dark, terrestrial prison, to the heights of yon blue sky
Invited to Love's banquet, O bird of the angel-race,
'Tis a source of sorrow if thou make this earth thy dwelling-place.
The morn to a voice gives birth — God addresses the soul —
'Lay the ego-dust on the way, and thou soon wilt reach the goal.'
The way which leads towards the Shrine ! and lo in thicket and briar.
Many lie victims of sorrow and immature desire.
Wounded, they fell on the way, failing to know before the end,
A beam of light, a touch, a kiss, a blessing from the Friend !

* * *

He is here, a moon more glorious than heaven e'er beheld,
Whether in wakefulness or dreaming.
Wearing a fiery diadem, immortal, unquenchable.
Behold ! O Lord, Thy goblet of Love hath caused my soul to swim,
And spoiled my body's clay-abode.

When the grape-Provider first embraced
my lonesome heart,
My veins were a-fire, and wine enflamed
my breast ;
When my eye discerned the Beloved,
a voice was heard :
' 'Tis well, O matchless Wine and
incomparable Cup ! '
Each darksome abode by Love's powerful
arm is hewn,
And through the gaps the amber orb
gleams.
When my heart caught sight of Love's
Ocean
It plunged in, saying : ' Who will
find me ? '
As clouds move after the sun,
So do hearts follow Thee, Sun of Tabriz !

* * *

A loveliness that all night long instructs
Venus and the moon on the wonder of
Love.
Whose twin vision by her beguiling
obscures the twin gaze of heaven.
Search your hearts ! O Moslems, whatever
may befall
I am so interfused with Him that no heart
is mingled with mine.
From the first, Love gave me birth, at the
last I yielded him my heart ;
The fruit which emerges from the bough,
hangs from it.
The end of his curl is calling : ' do thou
some rope-dancing.'
The candle's cheek is asking : ' where
tarries the moth for the burning ? '
In order to dance on that hoop, bestir
thyself O heart, do thou become a hoop ;
When his candle is a-flame, cast thyself
upon it.
When thou hast tasted the ecstasy of
burning, thou
Shalt never more be separated from the
flame ;
Even should life's waters come to thee,
Thou would not leave the Light.

* * *

Expressing himself in the eloquent language of the heart, Jalalu'l-Dīn Rūmī depicts with delicate imagery a spiritual realm of enchanting loveliness.

Yet the poet also unfolds a Path strewn with thorns, as the pilgrim-soul journeys to the inner Shrine. On the tariqa many trials are to be endured.

Deep into the secret cave of the heart, the 'keeper of the tavern', that is, the divine Guide, offers the wine of spirituality to the tavern-haunter or lover of God. This mystic wine induces holy inebriation, and the aspirant loses his sense of individuality. Finally, the Muhaqqiq becomes oblivious to the ego-world, and he bathes in the shimmering Ocean of Love where his illusory 'I-ness' is merged in the divine Essence. The once 'carnal soul' is now 'the serene soul' (nafs-e mutma'inna), where selfishness has been entirely subdued. In the heavenly garden, the song of the nightingale and glory of the Rose blend in perfect harmony.

From the silent Heart of the Immortal Rose, Rūmī the mystic sings :

'From every side the music of Love is
calling.
Love and the lover alone are everlasting.
Concern thyself with this truth.
All else is transient.'

With rare skill Jalalu'l-Dīn Rūmī plays upon the reed-flute of the human heart, composing a love-song of imperishable beauty.

He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened. He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is mightier still. He is rich who knows when he has enough.

— PARADOXES from *Tao Te King*.

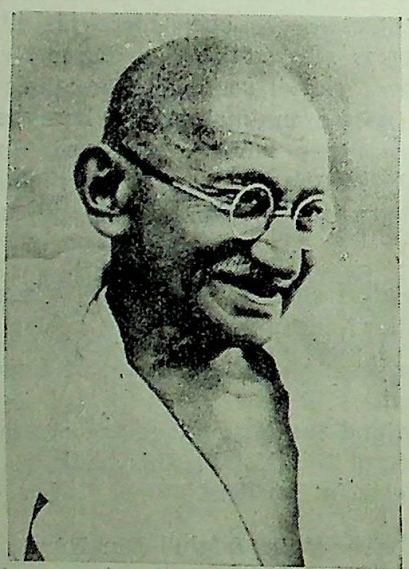
THE MAHARSHI AND THE MAHATMA

By
H. G. NILKANT

(The following has been translated from a passage in Sri Narayan M. Desai's Gujarati book, *Santa Sevata*. Sri Narayan is the son of Sri Mahadev Desai who was Mahatma Gandhiji's secretary.)

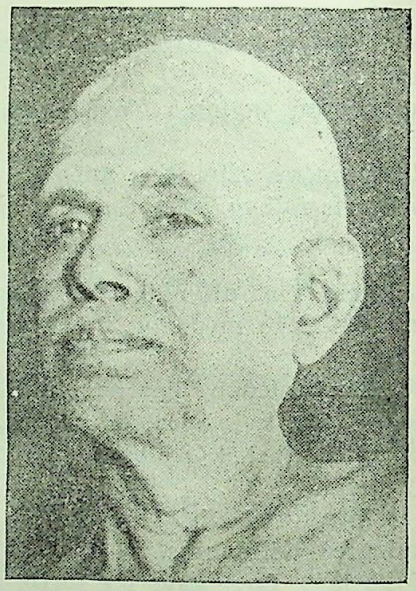
LET me describe right here an incident that happened during our return from the South India Hindi Prachar meeting.

Bezwada (Vijayawada) is a station on the railway route from Madras to Wardha. . . . The talk came up before we reached Bezwada. Jamnalalji (Sri Jamnalal Bajaj) had then recently been to Ramanashram. He was lavish in his praises before Bapu (Mahatma Gandhi) of the holiness and



The Mahatma

peace of that Ashram's atmosphere. Whenever a saint happened to be the subject of a conversation, father's heart would melt like butter. With devotional interest he began to inquire about Ramana Maharshi. Jamnalalji, Bapu and father started on a subject of equal interest. In the course of the talk Bapu suggested, "Mahadev, why not visit the Ashram yourself?" Father's heart leapt up from



The Maharshi

sheer joy. Jamnalalji also urged him: "Yes, yes. Do. It is really worth a visit. And now that you have come so near the place, go there right away. When, otherwise, are you going to have the leisure for it?"

Father asked me to pack up his kit-bag. The train had by then already reached the Krishna Bridge.

Jamnalalji was telling Bapu, "The peace I felt at Ramanashram, I did not even find at yours."

After a short while Bapu said to father, "Don't be in a hurry to return. If you have the same experience of peace as Jamnalalji you may stay on longer. Don't worry about the work."

Bapu uttered these words in quite a natural tone and manner. But the very

thought of keeping away from Bapu for long was unbearable to father. He turned towards me and said, "Babla (pet name), unpack the kit-bag." I was stunned. Bapu too looked on in mute surprise.

"Why, Mahadev, what makes you ask him to unpack?"

"I have given up the idea."

"But why?"

"One Swami is enough for me."

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

97. Of the ever-unsteady ego
Eddying like the wayward wind,
The source as well as final resting place
Is the still Heart. The arts build only
A bustling halfway house.

98. Though ardently we study works
Immaculate of radiant wisdom,
Yet as through meditation we try
To make these gains our own,
What we once learnt must be forgotten
And will fade away.

99. Those who know nothing but sense-pleasures,
Noodles to destruction doomed,
Resent transcendence of the senses
And miscall this fresh and fruitful knowledge
Dry Vedanta!

100. The experience of Vedanta comes
Only to one who is utterly
Without desire. Far, far it is
From those who still retain desires.
For such the penance is prescribed
Of longing for the Lord was knows no want
So as to end for ever craving.

101. Some who stay unmoving near
The Master of consummate knowledge
Age and die while their ego's darkness
Tarries like the steady shadow
Lurking at the lamp-post's foot.
Such is perhaps their rawness still
From former births persisting.

102. How is it that eightfold *siddhis*[1]
And supreme Self-knowledge do not
Always come together?
It is because the world is such
That wealth of power and wisdom's light
Differ in source and substance both.

103. Flung back by *vasanas*, those naughty boys,
Into *samsara's* eddying stream,
Some creatures suffer, all unable
To stand firm on the bank, the Self.

104. Lapsing from the right reality
Of Self-awareness vast, unbroken,
A separate "I" springs up which falls
Into the further folly of confronting
A world of other objects there without.

105. Trusting to the body's truth,
The false, deceitful ego-knot self-blinded
Lusts after various allurements —
All fancied like the blueness of the sky —
And tightens into hardness.

106. The mind's eye jaundiced by desire,
Blind to the Self from bondage free,
Mistakes the body as the "I",
Hides behind the five-fold sheath
And then appears before itself
As a world of objects too.

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1 *siddhis* come through *prarabdha*, enlightenment through Grace.

HAVE FAITH IN YOUR MIND

By
MASTER SENG TS'AN, the Third Ch'an Patriarch of China

It is not hard to realize your Mind
Which should not be an object of your choice.
Throw like and dislike away
And you'll be clear about it.
The slightest deviation from it means
A gulf as deep as that 'twixt heaven and earth.
If you want it to manifest
Be not for or against a thing,
For that is contentious,
A disease of the mind.
If its profoundness you ignore
You can never practise stillness.
Perfect like the great void it lacks
Nothing and has naught in excess.
If you say yes or no
You will miss its suchness.
To external causes cling not, stay
Not in the void (that is relative).
If you can be impartial
Differentiation ceases.
To stop disturbance leads to stillness
Which, if clung to, stirs the mind. But if
To opposites you cling
How can you know the One ?
If you do not recognize One Mind
Two opposites will lead you nowhere.
To avoid what *is* means to cling to what *is not*,
To cling to what *is not* means to revive what *is*.
The more you talk and think,
The further you are from it.
If you can halt all speech and thought
You will find it everyhere.
If you think success means to return all things to their source,
You will differ from our sect by clinging to its function.[1]
The moment that you look within
You surpass your contemplation
Of the void which is always changing
Due to your discriminating views.
Do not seek the real
But your false views lay down.
Avoid the real and the false
And never search for either.
Once you start to choose between right and wrong,
You will be confused and will lose your Mind.
All pairs from the One Mind spring
Which never should be clung to.
If the One Mind does not stir
Then all things will be harmless.
Things that are harmless cease to be,
Mind that stirs not does not exist.
Subjects disengaged from objects vanish,
Objects like their creator disappear.
Objects are caused by subjects
On whose existence they depend.
If you would understand dualities
Know that they spring from voidness absolute.
The absolute and all dualities
Are one, from It all things originate.
When you cease choosing between the coarse
And fine all prejudices die.
Since the Great Mind embraces all,
To realize it is not difficult
Or easy. In their distrust the ignorant
Waver between eagerness and hesitation.
If you grasp at it, you'll be in the wrong
Falling into the way of heretics.
If you lay it down
It stays not nor goes.
With the Tao unite your nature
And you will be free from troubles.
From the real clinging strays
And to confusion leads.
Discrimination's useless
So weary not your mind.
If you want to know the One

[1] If you think that your goal can be reached by returning all things to the root, i.e. the mind, you will cling to its function and will err from our Ch'an sect which is beyond the notion of functioning.

Reject not six sense data.
If they're not rejected
They are one with Bodhi.
The wise man is non-active,
The ignorant bind themselves.
All things are the same at heart
But clinging's from delusion.
If mind is used to seek itself,
Is this not a grave mistake ?
Delusion brings stillness and disturbance ;
Bodhi is beyond all good and evil.
All the pairs of opposites
From discrimination come.
Dreams, illusions and flowers in
The sky are not worth attachment.
Gain and loss, and right and wrong
Should be laid down at once.
If your eyes close not in sleep
All your dreams will disappear.
If you do not discriminate,
Then all things will be as they are.
Profound is this state of suchness,
Lofty and beyond illusions.
If things are not thought different,
To their nature they will return.
When they disappear,
Mind's without compare.
When it stops moving disturbance is
no more ;
When all motion ceases, stillness also stops.
When opposites disappear,
Where then can the One Mind be ?
When you search the ultimate,
You find it has no pattern.
In this impartial mind
Duality has vanished.
When distrust ceases,
Your faith will be true.
When all is thrown away
There's nothing to remember.
The mind that now is pure
Radiates and is not tired.
Since it is beyond discriminative thinking
It cannot be fathomed by that which knows
and feels.
Such is the state absolute
Free from the self and other.
If you would be one with it
All duality avoid.
In all places the non-dual is
The same, and there is naught outside it.
Sages everywhere
To this Sect belong,
Which is beyond time, long or short,
For a thought lasts ten thousand years.
It neither *is* nor *is not*
For everywhere is here.
The smallest equals the largest
For it is not confined by space.
The largest equals the smallest
For it is not within, without.
Is and *is not* are the same,
So what *is not* equals *is*.
If you can't so awaken
Then you should change your ways.
Now One is all
And all is One.
If you can so awaken,
Why worry if you do not achieve it ?
Just believe that your mind is non-dual
For your faith in it is not divided.
In it there's no room for word and speech ;
It has no present, past or future.

From *The Transmission of the Lamp*
Translated by *Upasaka Lu K'uan Yu*
(Charles Luk)

Who is there that can make muddy water clear ? But if allowed to remain still, it will gradually become clear of itself. Who is there that can secure a state of absolute repose ? But let time go on, and the state of repose will gradually arise....

— *Tao Te King.*

CONSUMMATUM EST

THE LAST DAYS OF PADRE PIO

By
GLADYS de MEUTER

ON the summit of the hill overlooking the town of San Giovanni Rotondo, the church of Our Lady of Graces was mantled in deep quiet.

At dawn, groups of pilgrims began to arrive to assist at Padre Pio's Mass and to pay their respects to this humble priest who had borne the stigmata fifty years this day.

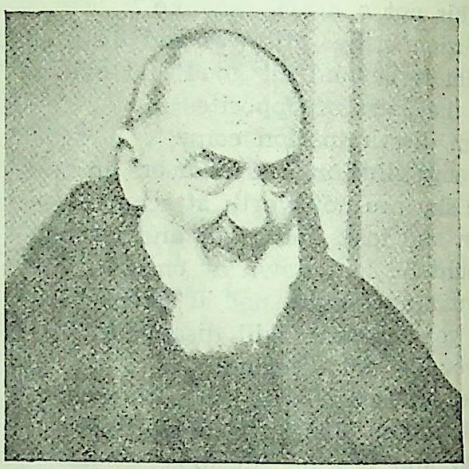
It had been in the early hours of the 20th September 1918, that Brother Nicola had found Padre Pio lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Although in great pain Padre Pio had made his way up the stairway on his own, and had entered his cell. Above the door were printed the words: 'The glory of the world has always sadness for a companion.'

Later it was known that while Padre Pio had been praying before the wooden crucifix in the 'coro', Christ had appeared to him in the Silence. It was only when Padre Pio had opened his eyes that he had discovered his wounds.

The people of San Giovanni Rotondo were well acquainted with what had followed. The many investigations by medical men and their reports. The scandalous allegations made by many, including members of the clergy — the trying ordeals throughout which Padre Pio had maintained absolute silence. The severe restrictions placed upon Padre Pio who had submitted without a murmur.

The time had come however, when vilifying tongues had been stilled, restrictions had been lifted, and Padre's serene, loving gaze had once more blessed the crowds who, hungry and thirsty for spiritual fare, flocked to the Church of the Madonna of Graces.

There they brought their sick, their dying, their unhappy ones, placing them all in the care of the priest who loved them. And



Father Pio

Padre Pio, labouring tirelessly brought solace, comfort, guidance to imploring hearts.

He wore half-gloves upon his hands to discourage the curious, but allowed sincere pilgrims to touch the hidden wounds with their lips.

As the people of San Giovanni Rotondo made their way up the slope leading to the Church on this fiftieth anniversary, they recalled many things.

* * *

In nearby Foggia there had lived a boy Giovannino, whose spine had been so deformed that his chin pressed against the ground when he crawled from place to place. When Giovannino was nine years old he had felt a touch on his back. To his amazement he found himself standing upright. With tear-wet eyes he saw the bleeding hand which had touched him — but when the boy cried out, the monk disappeared.

* * *

There was the case of the doctor who had scoffed at Padre Pio for years. One day the

doctor fell ill and he learnt that he had a brain tumour. Knowing his illness to be fatal his family begged him to allow them to summon a priest, but the patient stubbornly resisted their pleas. While the doctor lay dying, the restrictions imposed upon Padre Pio were lifted. Carrying the holy oils, Padre Pio made his way to the doctor's bedside where he blessed the sufferer. Some time later, the doctor left his bed, cured.

* * *

Innumerable were the cures effected by the prayers of Padre Pio.

At the righthand side of the road stood a concrete expression of Padre's compassion for the suffering — the magnificent 'House for the Relief of Suffering' which glowed with rosy loveliness in the morning sun. Born of a dream in Padre Pio's heart, the beautiful edifice opened its portals to all the sick, who gazed with wonder about them as they were taken through spacious corridors adorned with green and pale-rose stones, costly marble and delicate plants. When troubled in spirit the sufferer could enter the lovely chapel fragrant with flowers, and lift his heart in prayer. A dedicated staff infused hope and courage to the patient, and the fear-inspiring words 'hospital' and 'wards' had been tenderly transformed to 'house' and 'rooms'. The seven-storeyed building afforded a superb view, with the sea of Manfredonia sparkling in the distance. This Home of Love possessed over five hundred beds, a clinic for children, four surgeries, a department for training nurses and a pharmaceutical department. Left and right wings had been provided, for the ever increasing number of patients who sought refuge there.

On this, the fiftieth anniversary of the stigmata, the Church of Our Lady of Graces was filled to capacity, its altar aflame with crimson roses symbolizing the Fire of divine Love which emanates from the Sacred Heart. As Padre Pio entered, silence fell upon the congregation, who watched reverently as the Priest celebrated Mass.

Because of his advanced age Padre Pio remained seated, but his spirit soared beyond the ken of men as he was caught up in ecstasy. And those who were privileged to assist at this spiritual Communion watched in awed silence as tears bathed the radiant, transfigured face of Padre Pio.

When Mass was ended the crowds gathered to join in the celebrations which were to follow.

The 21st of September unfolded in a similar pattern, but on the 22nd it was tragically different.

Towards the end of Mass Padre Pio remained awhile deep in contemplation as was his custom, but when he got to his feet he suddenly collapsed. Strong arms held him up as a vigilant brother went to his aid, and as another monk hurried to render assistance the wheelchair was quickly brought to the altar steps.

Gently, Padre Pio was lowered into the wheelchair. He looked towards the faithful who had rushed to the altar rails; upon them he cast a penetrating, loving glance, lifted an arm in an embracing gesture, and murmured: 'my children, my children.'

Amidst the sobs and weeping which broke out, Padre Pio was taken away.

Grief pierced the hearts of all. Sorrow-stricken crowds gathered to gaze long and earnestly towards the window of Padre's cell. Outside in the clearing, people with tearful faces conversed together, bound in a brotherhood of love for their spiritual Father.

At 10-30 before the prayer groups commenced praying, the crowds waited expectantly for Padre Pio to appear at the window to bless them. Father Onorato strongly advised Padre against doing so, as he looked so ill, but Padre simply said: 'I wish to greet my children for the last time.' Thereupon Padre Pio approached the window of the Chorus and gave the pilgrims his paternal blessing.

That evening, Padre Pio appeared at his customary place at benediction but he wore a look of extreme fatigue. Presently, he put

out a faltering hand towards the balustrade before him. Father Onorato helped him gently to his feet, assisted by another brother.

Looking down at the upturned faces of the pilgrims Padre made a great effort to bless them. He lifted his hand once, twice, tried to do so a third time but lacked the strength.

Ill, and trembling on his feet, Padre wished nevertheless to demonstrate his love for his children.

Once again the wheelchair was at hand, and Padre was taken from the tear-wet gaze of the congregation.

As darkness fell, the spiritual children of Padre Pio gathered to pray, holding lamps in their hands — they were watching Padre Pio's window.

Their vigil was a long one, but their love shone as brightly as the lamps they held. Once, they caught sight of Padre Pio's familiar form, and he lifted a hand to bless them. Father Pellegrino saw tears in Padre's eyes.

The same Father was with Padre Pio during the night. When he entered Padre's cell he was asked to note the hour on the alarm clock placed on the night-table. He did so, wiping the tears from his eyes.

He was called to Padre Pio's side some five or six times in the course of the night and Father Pellegrino noted that although Padre Pio's eyes bore traces of weeping, his face wore a serene, tranquil expression.

'Stay near me, my son,' Padre Pio told him, and Father Pellegrino did so, remaining silent as Padre prayed.

At one stage, Padre asked Father Pellegrino whether he had said Mass, but the other replied: 'Spiritual Father, it is too early for Mass.'

'This morning say it for me,' he was told.

Padre Pio then confessed himself, after which he said: 'My son, if the Lord calls me today, I ask forgiveness of my fellow friars for all the trouble I have caused them; and ask them and my spiritual children to say a prayer for my soul.'

Father Pellegrino replied: 'Spiritual Father, I feel sure that the Lord will allow you to live for a long time yet, but should you be right, may I ask a last blessing for your fellow friars, your spiritual children and for all the sick?'

Padre Pio said: 'Yes, I bless all; but ask rather of the Superior that he give me his last benediction.'

Then Padre asked to renew the pledge of the religious order.

At one o'clock Padre addressed Father Pellegrino: 'My son, I am in bed but I am not breathing well. Let me get up. Seated in a chair I'll breathe easier.'

In order to get to the armchair Padre Pio took a few steps across the corridor and to Father Pellegrino's astonishment he walked upright and rapidly, so much so, that it was not necessary to render him any aid.

Padre suggested that they go out on the terrace, and holding him by the arm, his companion led him to the armchair where Padre Pio sat down, looking about him with great interest as though searching for something with his eyes.

After five minutes, Padre expressed the wish to return to his cell. With Father Pellegrino's help he was helped into the wheelchair and taken there, where he seated himself in a chair. Pointing to the wheelchair, Padre requested that it be put outside.

Father Pellegrino did so. Upon returning to the cell he noticed that a cold sweat beaded Padre's brow and that his face had become very pale. Between livid lips Padre repeated the words: 'Jesu-Maria'.

Alarmed, Father Pellegrino made a movement to go for help, but Padre restrained him, saying: 'Do not wake anyone.' Father Pellegrino left the cell hurriedly, only to be called back. When he returned, Padre reiterated: 'Do not wake anyone.'

Frantic with worry Father Pellegrino said imploringly: 'Spiritual Father, give me

leave to go for help.' Then the distraught monk went to summon the others, and Doctor Sala was immediately sent for.

Barely ten minutes later the doctor arrived and administered an injection. Placed in a sitting posture, Padre repeated with weakening voice : 'Jesu-Maria.'

Mario Pennelli, nephew of Padre Pio was called to his side, the director of the Casa Sollievo and doctor Giovanni Scarale. The brothers of the monastery were all there.

While the doctor gave Padre Pio oxygen, Father Paola administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, while the others knelt about Padre, praying.

At 2-30 a.m. with a sigh and a smile Padre Pio lowered his head on to his chest. He had expired.

Huge crowds flocked to the Church to behold the beloved form of Padre Pio and pay him their hearts' homage. Held in the grip of sorrow, people wept openly and unashamedly. Reverently they approached the bier in which Padre Pio lay, and reverently they kissed it.

Padre Pio's body has been placed in a coffin with a glass covering, in the crypt of the Monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo, and pilgrims continue to stream into this hallowed place to view the mortal chalice which housed divine Grace.

In the hearts of those who loved him, Padre Pio the Spiritual Father lives on.

Out of compassion for suffering humanity he entered the sacred and secret precincts of Love, to emerge bearing incomparable spiritual gifts which he showered upon all those who came to him in distress.

To the last, the bleeding hand had been raised in loving benediction.

Prayer to Guru

By
A. K. Vatal

Listen, O Guru,
To the songs of ages past ;
Those melodies of being, uncreated
That moulded the tendons of my heart
And yet were unvoiced —
For all my art !

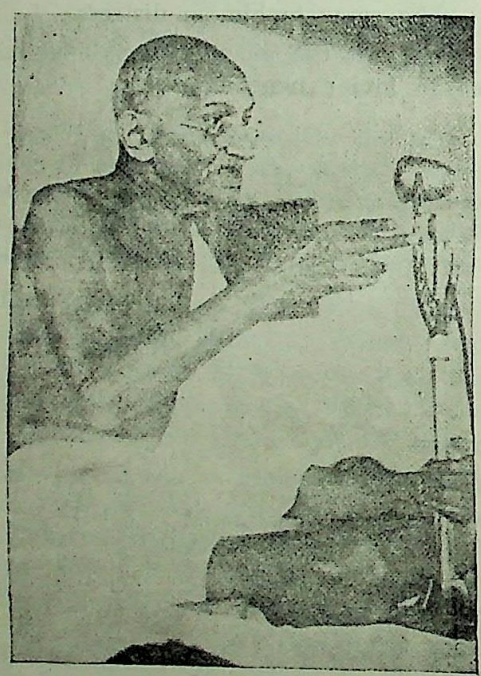
Listen, O Guru
To the songs tumultuous and sad
That I carried into this life,
When again from the lap of Gods I fell,
A starry tear-drop in space and time.
The songs I garnered in sadness
Through ages sempiternal,
Whilst I came and went, went and came back,
But which, alas ! never could I voice —
For all my art !

But see, Dear Heart,
The garland round Thy neck
Is unfading ! Woven of my heart-throbs
Since time first began
And I was struck with Thy Vision —
That garland of unfading fragrance
Thou proudly wearest —
Such is my art !

GANDHIAN HINDUISM AND SPIRITUALITY

By
I. JESUDASAN, S.J.

TO see Gandhian Hinduism in *perspective*, we must bear in mind that it was something into which he grew. Hinduism was the faith of his fathers. We all have a faith of our fathers. Unfortunately in many cases it just remains a faith of our fathers, distant and remote, not a faith of our own. But Gandhiji made Hinduism his own. He was not a Hindu just by birth but by choice.



He did not passively receive it as a heritage and hand it on to a succeeding generation. He made it so much his own that it grew with him. Paradoxical as it may seem he grew into it by contact with other religions. To say that he made it his own or that he grew into Hinduism by contact with other faiths is to say that he brought his whole self to Hinduism — his reason no less than his emotions — there is a strong rational element in his Hinduism as we shall see — and that it was an eminently practical thing with a strong, all-pervading moral cast.

As a thing he grew into, Gandhian Hinduism has a history, a content and a context. The remote context of that history was already summed up when I said that Hinduism was the faith of his fathers. The proximate context was his immediate household — father, mother and the servant woman — a father who though little instructed in Hindu doctrine, had "the kind of religious culture which frequent visits to temples and listening to religious discourses, make available to many Hindus",[1] an ascetical mother who left on Gandhi an outstanding impression of saintliness with her difficult vows, frequent fasts, daily visits to temples and hours of prayer, and a devout nurse Rambha who communicated to him her strong faith in the all round efficacy of Ramanama, the holy name of Rama.

A later Hindu religious influence from without his home circle was one Raychandbai who, though a dealer in pearls and precious stones, led a deeply religious life, and could pass easily from business transactions to spiritual experiences and impress Gandhi with his Hindu religious convictions.

The writings that early influenced Gandhian Hinduism were the Ramayana of Tulsidas which his father had read and to which Gandhi listened with rapturous attention; the uninspired recitation of the Bhagavat and the Rama Rakshu were easily dismissed in early youth; Manusmriti with its story of creation added to the religious scepticism of his teens. The Gita, the Bible of every Hindu, was to come rather late into his life, while a student for the bar at

[1] M. K. Gandhi: *The Story of my Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan. January 1945 p. 9.

London and at the encouragement of two Theosophist brothers. The Gita verses.

"If one
Ponders on objects of the senses, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind and man are all undone."[2]

impressed him most and are a pointer to the moral cast of Gandhiji's Hinduism.

More reading stimulated in him the desire to read books on Hinduism and disabused him of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition.

The interest in religions too started quite early. The days of sectarian bigotry were not long past. Memories of them were still alive in many minds. But in the home of the Gandhis there was religious tolerance. Though orthodox Vaishnavites his parents were not averse to other branches of Hinduism and even other religions. They would visit both Vaishnavite and Saivite temples and would take or send the children to both. Jain monks as well as Moslem and Parsi friends would pay frequent visits to Gandhi's father and hold long conversations on their faith. His father would listen to them always with respect and often with interest. Being constantly in attendance on his ailing father the young Gandhi had a chance to be present at these discourses. These and other influences combined to inculcate in his mind a broad tolerance for all religions from which Christianity alone was excluded and for which he even felt some antipathy . . . and there was good reason for it. Both Christianity and Gandhi transcended it. As an individual Gandhi could naturally do it much faster than a whole slow-moving institution. His antipathy turned into admiration when he discerned the pure essence behind so much sin and dirt, and he was to absorb something of that essence into his Hinduism and thus enrich it. The New Testament impressed him very favourably. The *Sermon on the Mount* went straight to his heart and he compared it with the Gita. "My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the Gita, 'The Light of Asia', and the Sermon on the Mount."[3]

This reading whetted his appetite for studying the lives of other religious teachers. Reading from Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-worship" the chapter on the hero as a prophet, he learnt of Prophet Mohammad's greatness. He even read about atheism.

Every teenager passes through crises of faith. Quite early in his teens Gandhiji's faith in God, religion and Hinduism had been put to the test. The warring creeds and the corruption, actual and rumoured, within his own Hindu fold, especially in the ugly shape of untouchability, presented the stumbling block. He had tided over it unscathed. But he was not yet a devout Hindu religious man, but only groping towards it.

When Gandhi returned from England, and even more so when he had settled in South Africa, in all his spiritual crises, especially when his Moslem and Christian "friends" were trying to win him into their respective religions, the man who had renounced the world, Raychandbai, proved his guide and helper. He urged Gandhi to study Hinduism deeper (which he did), assuring him that "on a dispassionate view of the question, I am convinced that no other religion has the subtle and profound thought of Hinduism, its vision of the soul or its charity."[4]

Thus Gandhi was walking on a path his Christian friends had not intended for him. But they awakened in him a deep and serious religious quest and thirst for knowledge. He read Max Muller's "India — What Can It Teach Us?", and the translation of the Upanishads. All this enhanced his regard for Hinduism whose beauties began to grow upon him without prejudicing him against other religious creeds. He also read Washington Irving's 'Life of Mahomet and His Successors' and Carlyle's panegyric of the Prophet — which raised Mohammad in

2 *Ibid.*, p. 60.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 111

his estimation. "The Sayings of Zarathustra" and Tolstoy's "The Gospels in Brief" and 'What to do?' were other books he read. They helped him to grow in his knowledge of different religions, and to practise what he learnt, e.g., yoga. Tolstoy's books particularly helped his greater realisation of the infinite possibilities of universal love.

He read Swami Vivekananda's "Rajayōga", M. N. Dvivedi's book of the same name and Patanjali's "Yoga Sutras" and made a thorough study of the Gita which became for him a dictionary of daily reference and an infallible guide of conduct. He drew from it the key concepts on the basis of which he revived the ashrama sannyasa, or religious ideal, the fullest blossom of Hinduism and indeed of all religions. Gandhi's religious life had reached its highest and definitive development. He had attained such proficiency in Hinduism both as a way of life and as an intellectual synthesis that he could confidently address public gatherings on the history and message of Hinduism.

In that religious life, for all practical purposes he read the essence of Hinduism in the first verse of the Isopanishad: "God the Ruler pervades all there is in this universe. Therefore renounce and dedicate all to Him and then enjoy or use the portion that may fall to thy lot. Never covet anybody's possession."[5] He makes this verse the yardstick of genuine Hinduism and he wants it inscribed and enshrined in the portals of every heart and temple.

However this is something basic to all religions and therefore what unites Hinduism to other religions and does not make it distinctive. Gandhi knew very well the distinctive features of Hinduism as we shall see in a moment. But his deep-seated attitude is made clear when he sees as the essence of Hinduism what is common to all religions. Like Bonhoeffer in the West and anticipating him, Gandhi points out the path of a species of religionless Hinduism or the universal religion of the heart's direct communion with God for those who can attain to it, without despising popular religious Hinduism.

He held the vision of unity, the four ashramas, cow-worship and belief in transmigration as the great distinctive values of Hinduism and distinguished in its spiritual, ritual, ethical and social aspects. "The keynote of Hinduism on the spiritual side was moksha or salvation; that is, the final absorption of the soul in the Infinite Soul that pervades all things. In regard to religion pantheism was the chief characteristic, whilst, on the ethical plane, self-abnegation was the most notable quality, with its corrollary, toleration. In social matters, the characteristic of caste was predominant, while the ceremonial characteristic was the sacrificing of animals."[6] Such was Gandhiji's summing up of the history of ancient Hinduism as published in abstract in *"The Star"* dated 10-3-1905. He recognised the two levels or layers of Hinduism — philosophical and popular: the philosophers recognising and worshipping God as the purest spirit, pantheism taking them to its highest flights, and bringing the ignorant masses to the lowest depths. "If the infant mind could not realise God as a pure spirit, it had no difficulty in worshipping Him through his various manifestations. Many worship Him through the sun, the moon and the stars, and many worship Him through sticks and stones also, a mode of worship to which philosophical Hinduism with its tolerant spirit, had no difficulty in reconciling itself."[7] He avowed the elasticity of Hinduism and, while admitting the existence of a number of schools, summed up the faith of the Hindus as follows: "God exists. He is without beginning, immaculate, and without any attribute or form. He is omnipresent and omnipotent. His original form is Brahman. It neither does, nor causes to be done. It does not govern. It is bliss incarnate, and by It all this is sustained. The soul exists, and is distinct from the body. It is also without

[5] *Harijan*, 30-1-1937, p. 405.
[6] *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. IV 1960, p. 369.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 376.

beginning, without birth. Between its original form and Brahman there is no distinction. But it takes on, from time to time, a body as a result of karma or the power of maya, and goes on being born again and again into high or low species in accordance with the good or bad deeds performed by it. To be free from the cycle of birth and death and be merged in Brahman is moksha or liberation. The way to achieve this moksha is to do pure and good deeds ; to have compassion for all living beings, and to live in truth. Even after reaching this stage, one does not attain liberation, for one has to enjoy embodied existence as a consequence of one's good deeds as well. One has, therefore, to go a step further. We will, however, have to continue to act, only we should not cherish any attachment to our actions. Action should be undertaken for its own sake, without an eye on the fruit. In short, everything should be dedicated to God. We should not cherish, even in a dream, the feeling of pride that we do or can do anything. We should look upon all equally. These are the beliefs or tenets of Hinduism."[8]

He too believed in all this, not as a matter of mere intellectual assent but with deep personal conviction. It was not a set of beliefs and code of conduct buried in Hinduism's ample scriptures, but a faith which visibly affected his whole adult life. People at various times have called him by the strange and chimerical titles of a 'Christian Mohammadan' a 'Mohammadan in disguise' and so forth. But though sympathetic to all religions, he was a Hindu at heart. His feelings for Hinduism were of the tenderest — as tender as those one has for one's mother or one's wife. He loved the great Hindu shrines. He took an interest in them which he took in no other. Thus he gave Hinduism a total acceptance.

But total acceptance was not total approval, nor a resignation of his own power of reasoning and discernment of the essence from the excrescence. With his feel of the Hindu faith and his knowledge of its historical evolution, he could discern the right development from the wrong. As he did not love Hinduism for its wrong historical developments, so neither did he reject it for them. Instead he proposes reform from within. "I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism."[9]

He believed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu Scriptures, and therefore in the avatars and rebirths. He did not disbelieve in idol-worship. He believed in cow protection, in its larger sense. He believed in varnashrama dharma in its strict Vedic sense which was different from its crude popular sense. He valued the Hindu Scriptures highly. Nothing elated him so much as the music of the Gita or Tulsidas' Ramayana. The Gita was his solace at a time of illness that threatened to prove fatal.

But his faith in the Vedas and other writings did not oblige him to accept every word and verse as divinely inspired. He recognised the essential truth of the scriptures as divinely inspired and revealed, while making allowance for all the historical limitations of the human transmitters of the divine message. To arrive at the revealed truth, he applies his own historical criticism to the texts in question, and then reapplies that truth to the contemporary situation. Thus he preserves tradition without archiologism and makes tradition modern and relevant to the present without losing the roots. His chaste life, detachment from self and all possessiveness, openness to truth and love for all life together with his critical sense attuned him to an instinctive perception of the central message of Hindu Scriptures. In this context, he calls by the name of reason this quasi-instinctive historical sense ; and the other attributes he calls moral-sense. If the scriptural interpretation of any school, however learned, is repugnant to this reason and moral sense, he refuses to submit to it. These same attributes or qualifications give him the assurance to reject passages from the scriptures, e.g. those that

8 *Ibid.*, p. 408.
9 *Young India*, 6-10-1921, p. 318.

perpetuate castism and violence, either as later interpolations or as merely historical accidents. Thus, "My Krishna has nothing to do with any historical person. I would refuse to bow my head to the Krishna who would kill because his pride is hurt, or the Krishna whom non-Hindus portray as a dissolute youth. I believe in Krishna of my imagination as a perfect incarnation, spotless in every sense of the word, the inspirer of the Gita and the inspirer of the lives of millions of human beings. But if it were proved to me that the Mahabharata is history in the same sense that modern historical books are, that every word of the Mahabharata is authentic and that the Krishna of the Mahabharata actually did some of the acts attributed to him, even at the risk of being banished from the Hindu fold, I should not hesitate to reject that Krishna as God incarnate. But to me, the Mahabharata is a profoundly religious book, largely allegorical, in no way meant to be a historical record. It is the description of the eternal duel going on within ourselves, given so vividly as to make us think for the time being that the deeds described therein were actually done by the human beings. Nor do I regard the Mahabharata as we have it now a faultless copy of the original. On the contrary I consider that it has undergone many amendations."[10]

Regarding castism, since "the spirit of the Vedas is purity, truth, innocence, chastity, humility . . . and all that makes a man or woman noble and brave," and "there is neither nobility nor bravery in treating the . . . scavengers of the nation as worse than dogs", he concludes that "untouchability is not a sanction of religion", but an evil to be eradicated.

He admits an equal-in-work varnashrama dharma where all talents are put at the service of others without exploitation and all earn their livelihood through hereditary professions as a divinely willed and just social order. He has a socio-historical explanation of caste, but that does not blind him to its present ills and irrelevance.

Another such excresence in the Hindu religion was animal sacrifice. He admits as a historical fact that animals were sacrificed in the past as in the present, in the name of religion. But he adds that such practice is not religion, much less Hindu religion. So he considers it positive irreligion to sacrifice goats to Kali, and he does not consider it an authentic part of Hinduism.

In the Isopanishad he had rightly grasped the spirit of India and of Hinduism — the spirit of ahimsa, universal love or compassion for all life. The cow and cow-protection therefore far from being a fetish as they so often are for modern fanatics, were for Gandhi a symbol of the universal love that ought to prevail, most of all among men.

As he loved Hinduism dearer than life itself, its taint became for him an intolerable burden. And he was only opposed to the taint, the custom of one age which tended to become the tyranny of another, and not simply to a usage merely because it was ancient, and certainly not to the ever new religious truth which is also ever ancient. In condemning superstition he did not dub all old usages superstitious.

He was not against temple-worship and idol-worship, though he himself had stopped temple visits long ago, and idols did not excite any feeling of veneration in him. But he recognised the spirit behind the idol-worship — its symbolism, its uplifting character, and our nature's demand for these religious symbols and places of worship to supply a felt spiritual need. Given this nature and the relative religious development of individuals, "to reject the necessity of temples is to reject the necessity of God, religion and earthly existence."[11] From the symbolic or representative character of idols, he contests the opinion that Hindus are polytheistic idolators and affirms that through a stone image, the Hindu seeks to establish contact with God.

[10] *Young India*, 1-10-1925, p. 336.
[11] *Harijan*, 11-3-1933, p. 5.

His search for God was the search for Truth, that which alone IS — Sat — of Its very nature. Among the innumerable descriptions of God, he worshipped Him as Truth and, in pursuit of this quest and yearning to realise it, he was ready to sacrifice everything that was dearest to him, be it life itself. All that he did by way of writing and speaking, and all his ventures in the political field were directed to this end. Knowing fully well that God governed every breath of his life, it was an unbroken torture to him that he was still so far from Him. This was when he wrote his autobiography. As years rolled by, however, he was increasingly able to hear God's voice in him and to feel His nearness and help even in the darkest hours of his life. As days passed, he felt this living presence in every fibre of his being. But for the experience of this intimacy, the disappointments of his public career and the misery he saw around him would have driven him to madness and despair. And the godlike democrat that he was, he did not hesitate to proclaim the possibility for every human being to attain the state of sinless blessedness in which he would feel within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else.

Universal ahimsa or a suffering love together with prayer (and fasts) based on and oriented to this love is the path to God-realisation or union, not alone in a next world or a next existence but already here on earth. Prayer therefore should not be selfish. More can be said of Gandhian prayer. But we had better reserve it for special treatment elsewhere. One thing however is worthy of special note. God is indeed immanent in ourselves and in all creation. But we come to realise Him or to be united with Him only through self-transcendence, by eradicating our ego. In other words, Gandhi affirms God's transcendence in His very immanence. There is no danger in Gandhi of a monistic interpretation of reality and of the scriptures. While remaining faithful to the spirit of Advaitism he also gives full scope to the path of dvaita.

This then in brief outline was Gandhian Hinduism and his contribution to the faith of his fathers. In his feel of Hindu tradition and his sense of the right contemporaneity of that tradition, he was indeed a prophet of Hinduism.

However, Gandhiji did not found any religious sect, and has no sectarian followers. He rethought and refined Hinduism for himself, discovered its timeless essence and adapted and applied it to the concrete circumstance of his time. What he thus realised he made known to others by written and spoken word, not that they might copy him, but that they too might arrive at a personal religion of their own. Thus he had a more universal appeal than the founder of a sect.

The perception of the opening verse of Isopanishad as the essence of Hinduism and indeed of all religion helped Gandhi to make a real synthesis of all his activities and to construct a unified world-view and a personal religion that is all-pervading. His application of the historical method and perspective to the interpretation of the scriptures introduces a new dimension into an otherwise reputed cyclic and time-unconscious Hindu view of life. This introduction should also clear contemporary Hinduism of the charges of naivete in faith and archiologism in worship. Reason does play a good part in Gandhian religion. But it is not a rationalist reason. His faith remains pure and intact. His understanding and interpretation of the scriptures is extended, but not strained.

The fortresses of Hindu orthodoxy may condemn Gandhi as a rebel and a heretic. Every fossilised structure has dubbed its prophets rebels. And Gandhi has paid a prophet's price in his own blood. Only now and hereafter his prophetic effectiveness will begin to make its impact felt. Moreover Gandhi comes in a whole line of modern Hindu reformers who have set afoot a movement of reform which all the old and battered fortresses of dead conservatism cannot check. Their very fossilisation has spelled their safe-shelving. And Gandhian Hinduism in its faithfulness to the best tradition, its contemporaneity and its non-sectarianism has the promise of universal appeal.

SELF-REALISATION

English translation of a Malayalam article entitled ATMANIVRITI, *appearing in the Magazine also entitled* ATMANIVRITI, *May 1968 published by Swami Chidananda Saraswati, Gnanandasramam, Pallur, Trichur (Kerala).*

THE word happiness is commonly taken to mean enjoyment. But the fact is that none of the so-called mundane enjoyments can be termed happiness in the true sense of the word. These are no more than sensual satisfaction derived from external objects and serve only to strengthen the ego. The state in which there is no experience of anything including one's own body apart from the Self, is spoken of as real happiness. Because such a state is supra-mundane, no one can achieve it through materialistic pursuits. Hence it can be experienced in Self-Realisation only. It also does not admit of description or comparison in words. Nevertheless, it is possible for *sadhakas* (aspirants) to experience it in the ripe stage of their spiritual progress.

The world is limited to the three-fold states known as waking, dream and deep sleep. There is no world outside these three states. These states are only a play of the ego which itself is covered by a veil of ignorance. In the most gross state, viz., that of waking, the gross body, the gross world and its objects are perceived. In the subtle state of dream the subtle world is experienced and in the causal state of deep sleep there is only ignorance. While from the standpoint of the totality of the world, these states are throughout present everywhere, yet from the individual's point of view, each person experiences them separately in a different way. It is common knowledge that one man's dream state is limited to himself alone and no one else can have access to it. It is also clear that all the objects and all the experiences of a man in his dream state are the creations of his own mind. Hence the individual alone is the author of the dream-world and the pain and pleasure herein. The same is the case with the state of deep sleep. The world and the experiences thereof rise with the ego and also set with it. Therefore, it is the ego that is the root cause for the experiences gained in the states of dream and sleep.

On the same analogy, the waking state alone cannot be different from the other two states. The waking state of each individual is peculiar to himself as is the case of the dream and deep sleep states. In practice we are unable to appreciate this as the waking states of all appear to get fused together as one. This is due to the very gross nature manifest in the waking state where the ego is most active. Notwithstanding this mistaken notion, the truth is that the waking state of one is not similar to that of another, as evidenced from the experience and knowledge of the wakeful state which we know are not the same for every one. Just as the objects, pain and pleasure dreamt are mere activities of the mind so also the experiences of the waking state emanate from, and merge in, the mind of the experiencer. As the activities of the mind are impermanent, the objects cognised thereby are also impermanent. Viewed from this angle, it becomes clear that there is no such thing as the world, being only a projection of the ignorant mind. That is why Vedanta proclaims that the world is illusory.

No object in the world of our mental creation appearing to be real due to ignorance, has continuous existence in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. There is no difference between the names and forms of the physical world and the dream world except that the former are gross, and the latter are less gross, or subtle. Otherwise, both are equally non-existent and unreal. It is through the medium of the sense perceptions one enjoys or suffers. The phenomenal world has no independent existence. Consequently, in the enjoyment of sense objects, there cannot be any perman-

ent happiness. That is why it has been stated that even the greatest source of joy in the world proves transitory and can never lead to realisation of one's true state of *Ananda*.

In Self-Realisation, the ego merges with the Self in absolute tranquillity. The Self is, as it were, a mere witness to the happenings in the three states and is not affected by any of the activities of the world. The jiva or the ego is a reflected image of the Self on the intellectual plane. It is this jiva which gets entangled in the three-fold states and suffers or experiences the non-existent pain and pleasure, death and birth and all other happenings of the world with an apparent sense of reality. It wrongly identifies itself with the body and possessions like houses, relatives, etc., with a sense of "I-ness" and "mine-ness". Again, it is the same jiva who is seen in different roles as the ignorant, the unhappy, the fettered, etc., and also as one anxiously seeking liberation through devotion, knowledge and detachment from desires. The reason for the jiva's bondage and unhappiness are its imagined separate existence from the ever-blissful Atma, the Self, and attachment to its egoism and the desire to enjoy the pleasures of the world. When the jiva realises this truth, starts discarding its tendencies and remains detached from the three-fold states, it frees itself from the clutches of multiplicity and ultimately transcends them. In this transcendental state, the ego and the Self merge together and an indescribable realisation dawns in its natural splendour. This is the glorious repose of the ego in the Self or Self-Realisation.

In the eyes of ordinary people who have not awakened to the unreality of the material world and the truth of the Self, the world provides innumerable and variegated enjoyments. They long for such pleasures, acquire them and even seem to enjoy them. In truth, the pleasures do not bestow any lasting happiness on the enjoyer. They afford only a sense of pseudo-happiness. A person who experiences real happiness will not forsake the same. Is there anything in the world which gives lasting happiness and does not become a source of anxiety and pain eventually? How then can such joy be termed happiness? Worldly pleasures, even if considered as happiness, are not unconditioned and can be experienced only at certain times and under certain circumstances. Further, they can be enjoyed only through the medium of external factors like body, senses and mind. The aftermath of these hard-earned enjoyments turns out to be nothing but misery!

The above is not the case with Self-Realisation. It transcends time and space, body and the phenomenal world. Its very nature being Bliss, the Self stands in no need of external objects. Therefore, Self-Realisation is a natural state of unsurpassed Bliss. Only it is not possible to attain Self-Realisation by leading a life full of vasanas or latent tendencies. The Self-realised man is at once liberated and has no desire left to agitate his mind. His life becomes sublimated.

The path that serves to show the way to Self-Realisation is great and noble. (*It is a matter of great satisfaction that* THE MOUNTAIN PATH *does this to help sadhakas in all corners of the world, the credit for which must go to its indefatigable Editor.*) In fact, there can be no greater service to mankind. Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (knowledge) and Vairagya (detachment) are the well-known important steps in the path to Self-Realisation.

There are two *Mahans* in our country. One is Ramana Maharshi and the other, Gandhiji. The Maharshi gives us Peace. Gandhiji does not allow any one to remain in peace. Both for the same reason do so — for the spiritual freedom of India.

— SMT. SAROJINI NAIDU (1938).

ENQUIRY AND SADHANA

A report of questions and answers exchanged between Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri D. C. Desai, I.R.S.E., Executive Engineer, E.I. Railway, at Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, South India, on 24-8-1944 at 9 a.m.

Sri Desai: During the Enquiry, should I repeat mentally the questions: "Who am I (*Koham*)?" etc., just like the Japa of a Mantra again and again, with feeling and understanding of the same, or ask them once or twice daily in the beginning and then concentrate the mind on the source of ego — the heart and on the efforts to prevent occurrence of worldly thoughts and doubts?

Sri Maharshi: Japa of *Koham* is not correct. Put the question once only and then concentrate on finding the source of the ego, and preventing recurrence of thoughts.

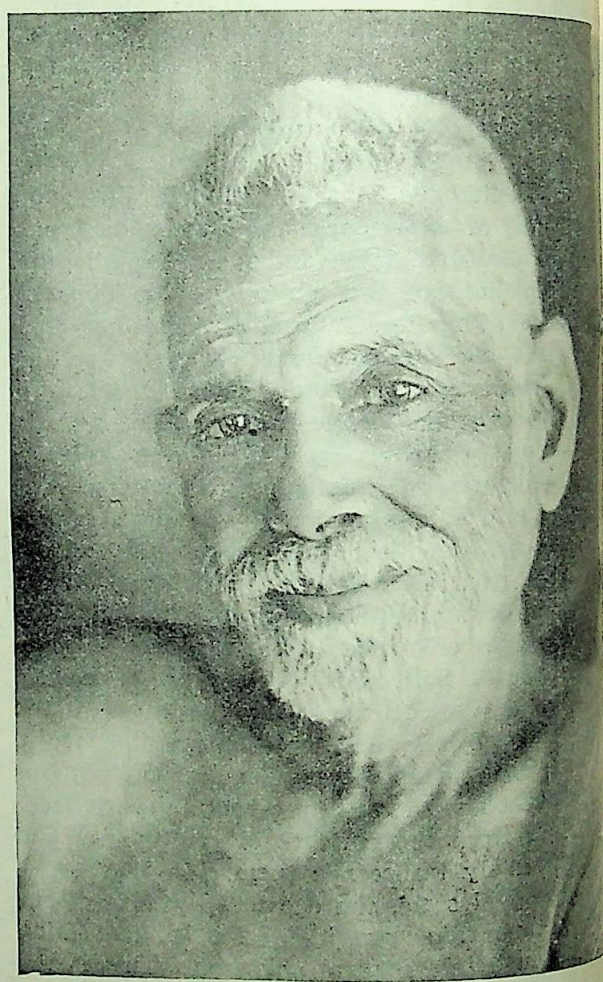
D: Should I endeavour to breathe in and out deeply and rhythmically during the enquiry, and synchronise the formula, *Koham*, with the same?

Or should I pay attention to the incoming and outgoing breaths, while repeating the questions, *Koham*, *Kutoham*, etc.?

M: You should not attend to the breathing, if you are capable of concentrating on the enquiry without it. Some may have to attend to the breathing if unable to concentrate on the enquiry alone. Some may practise *kevala kumbhaka* during the enquiry. Some may require the help of regular pranayama also to steady the mind, and control the thoughts.

All these practices are to be given up when the mind becomes strong enough to pursue the enquiry without their aid. *Pranayama* is to be practised with the usual caution. It will gradually increase the power and duration of the *kumbhaka*. It will make the mind one-pointed. Take its help if unable to concentrate without it.

Pranayama is like reins to control the mind-horse, or like brakes to control the wheel of thoughts . . . "Who am I" and "Whence am I" are one and the same. They refer to the ego only. No such questions can be asked in the case of the Real Self.



D: Should I alternate my questions *Koham* etc. with the replies given by Sri Sankara, such as *mano buddhyahankar chittani naham* etc.? Or should I repeat the formula *Shivoham* after each question *Koham*?

M: Suggestive replies such as *Shivoham* etc. to the enquiry, are not to be given to

the mind during the meditation. The true answer will come by itself. Any answer the ego may give cannot be correct. These affirmations or auto-suggestions may be of help to those who follow other methods, but not in this method of enquiry. If you go on asking, the reply will come. The method of enquiry is dhyana, and the effortless state is Jnana.

D : I have been practising saguna meditation with japa of Guru-mantra in accordance with the teachings and writings of my Gurudev. Can I practise meditation according to the method of enquiry "Who am I" now ? Am I fitted to take up this method, if I feel inclined to do so ?

M : 'I' is also a Guru-mantra. The first name of God is 'I'. (*Tasya aham nama*, Br. Up.). Even OM comes later. Atma or the real Self is always I-I. There is no mantra without the person who does the Japa, i.e. *Aham*. The japa of *aham* is always going on within.

Japa leads to dhyana and dhyana leads to Jnana. You may practise saguna meditation or the method of enquiry, according to your inclination. Only that method will appeal to a person which is most suitable for him.

D : I have been practising other forms of sadhana also, apart from the Saguna meditation mentioned above, such as japa, mantra-writing, keertan, bhajana, swadhyaya, spiritual propaganda, lectures, free distribution of religious publications, etc.

Should I continue these in addition to the enquiry of "Who am I" if I get spare time, or should I curtail some or all of these and spend more time in the enquiry only ?

Will the above practices be helpful in quickening my progress in the enquiry ?

M : Without losing hold of the knowledge of "Who you are", you may continue to perform all activities as prompted by the inner controller. They will go on even without your efforts. What you are destined to do, you cannot avoid. They will come your way of their own accord. You should also understand what Japa, Kirtana etc. are meant for. Become and stay what you are. The real Japa is always going on. Japa and God are one and the same. See the philosophy of Name as given by Saint Namdev.

D : In the query "Who am I", does the 'I' refer to the ego or the Atman ?

M : In the enquiry, 'I' refers to the ego.

D : Are my present qualities of faith, humility and surrender sufficiently intense, or are they still very imperfect and require further development ?

If so, how can I quickly develop them to perfection, so as to deserve Grace and early success in the realisation of Atman, or in the annihilation of the ego ?

M : Do not entertain such thoughts of imperfection, lack of qualities, etc. You are already perfect. Get rid of the ideas of imperfection and need for development. There is nothing to realise or annihilate. You are the Self. The ego does not exist. Pursue the enquiry and see if there is anything to be realised or annihilated. See if there is any mind to be controlled. Even the effort is being made by the mind which does not exist.

D : Is it helpful in the enquiry to sit in siddhasana, keeping the spine erect, sitting on deerskin, kushasana, etc. during the meditation, or are they not quite necessary. Will they expedite the progress ?

M : The real asana is "Being established" in the Self-Reality or the Source. Sit in your Self. Where can the Self go and sit ? Everything sits in the Self. Find out the source of 'I' and sit there. Do not have the idea that the Self cannot be realised without the help of asanas etc. They are not at all necessary. The chief thing is to enquire and reach the source of the ego. These details such as posture etc. may distract the mind towards them or to the body.

D : Which books are most helpful in swadhyaya during spare time (for quick training of the mind for the enquiry) ?

M : You may read whichever book you like. Self (Atma) is the real book. You can look into it whenever you like. Nobody can take it away. It is always at hand, to be read. Hold on to your Self in your spare time also, and then you can read any book.

D : If doubts, fears and worries harrass me during meditation, how can they be most effectively removed ?

M : Ask yourself "To whom do these doubts, fears and worries occur ?" — and they will vanish. Cease to pay attention to them. Pay attention to the Self within. Fears etc. can only arise when there are two, or when anybody else exists apart from, or separate from or outside of you. If you turn the mind inward towards the Self, fears etc. will disappear.

If you try to remove a doubt or fear, another doubt or fear will arise. There will be no end to it. The best method to annihilate them is to ask "To whom do they occur ?" — and they will disappear. Destroying a tree by plucking its leaves one by one is impossible. Other leaves will grow by the time you pluck a few. Remove the root of the tree — the ego — and the whole tree with its leaves and branches will be destroyed. Prevention is better than cure.

D : Should I look for the source within the body ?

M : The ego arises within the body. Hence in the first instance you may look within the body for its source. When you reach the source there will be no inside or outside, because the source or the Self is all-pervading. After realisation everything will be inside the Self.

D : Is the source on the right side of the middle line of the chest ?

M : The Heart is defined as the place from which the 'I'-thought arises. Heart means the Centre (of consciousness). It cannot be identified with any part of the physical body.

D : What can I do to increase the receptivity of the mind to your spiritual vibrations while sitting in the hall, and to increase the frequency and duration of the efforts at enquiry in the hall, or to ease such efforts ?

M : Keep the mind quiet. That is enough. Sitting in this hall will help you. The purpose of efforts is to get rid of all efforts. The force will be clearly felt when the stillness is achieved. Spiritual vibrations exist everywhere. They will manifest when the mind is stilled.

D : Will it be helpful if I gaze from time to time on your eyes or face during the effort at meditation, or should I keep the eyes closed ? If closed, should I concentrate them on the ajna-chakra, or deep down in the heart ? When practising the enquiry at one's own place should the eyes be closed or fixed on some object of devotion ?

M : Look at your Self or Atma rather than anywhere else. The eyes may be kept open or closed — it is immaterial. There is only one I, whether you spell it 'I' or 'EYE'. There is no point in opening or closing the eyes. Attention must be focussed on the inner I. You are not an 'I' that can be opened or closed. You may close or open the eyes according to your liking or inclination. It is immaterial, and not important. You will cease to think of the world when you think of the Self. If you are in a room and close your eyes and do not look out, it is immaterial whether you close the windows or keep them open. The body is the room, the eyes are the windows.

Looking at ajna-chakra etc. is not necessary in this method. It may be helpful in keeping the mind from going out towards external objects. Concentrate on the Self without which there are no chakras. They do not exist without you. You are all of them. All centres (chakras) are in the heart. The Heart is not the anahata chakra. The latter is in the spinal cord. Heart is 'I'.

D : I am often baffled and depressed during or outside my meditation by the thoughts of millions of souls who are either quite ignorant or quite innocent, and are suffering intolerable pains and tortures in this world ; e.g. (a) starvation of the poor

by famine, poverty or unemployment; (b) pain and suffering through diseases of ignorant people caused by ignorance of laws of hygiene, diet or poverty; (c) bombing of innocent women and children; (d) suffering through floods, earthquakes, etc. of innocent and poor persons; (e) killing of animals for food; (f) insects and lower animals being eaten up by higher animals in nature, and so on.

I try to convince myself that all this must be due to their evil karma in past lives, but doubts still arise as to how and by whom their free will was so directed as to force them to commit such actions. If it was due to desire, why or how did they come to get it or such tendencies originally? If it is due to avidya, dehadhyas, etc., how can they be held responsible for the same?

M: First find out whether the ego exists, who is depressed by these thoughts. Find out how you got the idea of the body. Solve this problem of your ego, then see if anything remains to be solved.

Bhagavat Saptah at Sukratal, U.P.

From March 7th to 17th, Shri P. B. Kotak, Vice-Chairman of Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, Bombay, celebrated Bhagavat saptah (Discourses on Srimad Bhagavat) at holy Sukratal being the exact place where Maharshi Sukhdevji first expounded the Bhagavat to King Parikshit, 5000 years ago, under the Banyan Tree on the banks of the Ganges. The original tree and the old temple still exist. It is on this spot that the discourses by the famous and great exponent Shri Ramchandra Dongre Maharaj were held under the patronage of Shri Kalyanji Devji Maharaj, a saintly person, who at the age of 83 goes bare-foot from village to village to serve the poor, himself taking one meal a day of only groundnuts and cheap roots or fruits. Many devotees from Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Hardwar, Rajkot and Bhavnagar and nearby places attended, among whom mention may be made of Shri Jaishukhlal Hathi (Union Minister for Labour), Shri U. N. Dhebar, Shri Hansraj Gupta (Mayor of Delhi), Rai Bahadur Gurjarmal Modi (then President of FICCI), Shri Krishnaraj Thackersay of Thackersay Group of Mills, Shri Hariraj Swarup from Muzaffarnagar. According to them, it was a rare occasion being the first one after 5000 years held under the same banyan tree by Shri Dongre Maharaj considered to be Sukhdev incarnate, and was indeed a unique sight. Such was the sacred function on the banks of the holy river Ganges. Daily about 500 devotees and many poor people were fed for 10 days.

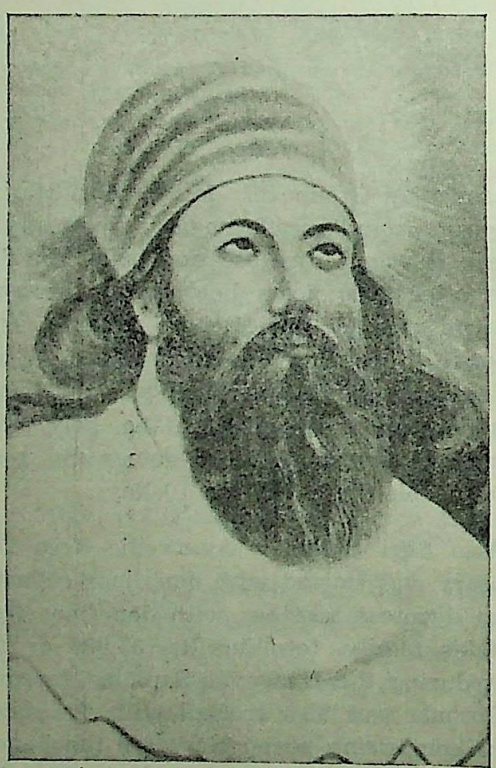
Also Shri Sukhdev Ayurvedic Free Dispensary was started with donations collected from devotees together with donations from Kotak's family, totalling Rs. 35,000 on the spot during the Bhagavat Saptah. Moreover a Goshala was also erected with the donations comprising seven cows for the benefit of the Temple and the students learning Sanskrit in the temple. Further Shri P. B. Kotak donated an ample sum of money to provide for a daily reading of Shri Bhagavat Katha and the continuous burning of *Akhand Jyoti*. Hereafter the holy spot will be known as *Sukhdevnagar*.

ZOROASTER AND DUALITY

By
G. R. KAPADIA

THERE is no doubt that one of the main tenets of Zoroastrianism is the conflict within man between Ahura and Ahriman, good and evil. In fact, this dichotomy largely pervades the creed and extends beyond man to the whole of creation.

The antagonism between good and evil — angromainyus versus spentamainyus — is



Zoroaster

not peculiar to Zoroastrianism. It is in fact one of the principal concepts of all religious and moral thinking. But it makes all the difference in the world how this duality is looked upon. Evil, in Zoroastrianism, is envisaged as the "twin-brother" of good. This means that good and evil, as concepts, are inseparable. They exist together or else they do not exist at all.

In other words, co-existence is the essence of this duality. Then, where is the duality?

'Good and evil', together, forms a contrasting judgment. In fact, in this sphere of thought all comparisons are also contrasts. Discrimination enters into the judgment. This discrimination is not limited to good and evil but extends to night and day, beauty and ugliness, bliss and misery. It also extends to grade, size and quality. When one compares two things big and small or big and bigger, one is actually forming a contrast in the mind. When a thing is compared with another, it is also contrasted and *vice versa*. The contrast between good and evil — from which arises the concept of conflict — is also a comparison.

Good and evil, as concepts, are concretised and made palpable in good and evil men, good and evil qualities of things and good and evil forces of nature.

A little historical background is necessary to see what Zoroaster built on to initiate a new religion. The Magi were the priestly caste or order of ancient Media or Persia. They held pre-eminence in the religious sphere throughout the era of Persian rule. Their religion, historians have pointed out, approximated in many essentials to Zoroastrianism, and even some have thought that Zoroaster was in all probability himself a Magus.

One of the central doctrines of the Magi was the principle that good and evil were rival deities. Both had to be 'worshipped', that is, recognised with respect as inevitably co-existent.

Even Gnosticism had a strong admixture of Persian dualism in it with Babylonian astral mythology, cabalistic Judaism and Greek philosophy thrown in. There were at

one time Christian Gnostics, too. They saw in the person of Christ the Enlightened One who had the gnosis or knowledge which led to emancipation from "the clutch of matter".

Apart from dualism, Zoroastrianism is impregnated with a good deal of pantheism, polytheism and the old Persian, that is, Aryan folk-religion. Here again the Prophet was building on familiar creeds to propagate his own.

The belief in many gods and worship of nature as seen in the majesty or fury of the elements does not necessarily preclude belief in God. Such belief cannot all be put down to just pagan or heathen awe. Wordsworth, in our own days, comes to mind :

"I have learned to look on Nature,
Not as in the hour of thoughtless youth,
But hearing often times the still, sad
music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating though of ample
power
To chasten and subdue.
And I have felt a presence
That disturbs me with the joy of elevated
thought,
A sense sublime of something
Far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,
And the round ocean and
The living air and the blue sky
And in the mind of man.
A motion and a spirit
That impels all living things
And objects of all thought
And rolls through all things.
Therefore am I still a lover
Of the woods and the meadows and the
mountains,
Of all that we behold from this green
earth,
Of all the mighty world of ear and eye,
Both what they perceive and half
conceive,
Well pleased to recognise
In Nature and the language of the senses,
The anchor of my purest thoughts,
The nurse, the guide, the guardian of
my heart,
And soul of all my moral being.
— *Lines written on the*
Tintern Abbey.

(The lines are quoted from memory).

One can see here Wordsworth's Higher Pantheism. Devotion to Nature and the ecstasy it begets make him aware of "the presence" that disturbs him with "the joy of elevated thought, a sense sublime". Behind the creation, as seen in all its raw and vast majesty, is naturally the Creator.

The same is the rapture of extreme devotion the Zoroastrian feels in chanting the hymns of the Gathas, be it "Khorshed Meherni Nyas" (Paean to the Sun), "Atash Nyas" (Paean to Fire) or other prayers which sing to the glory of God's beauteous creation.

Coming back from pantheism and polytheism to dualism, the idea of conflict between good and evil spirits is immanent in Hinduism too. What about the Gita itself, the Song Celestial ? The very first chapter opens on the martial spectacle of a field of battle with two armies drawn up in array for the conclusive death-grapple. This could be taken symbolically for the battle within ourselves.

There is some confusion, as to the term "Asuras" which in Hinduism, are evil spirits ; while Ahura, of Zoroastrianism, is God Himself.

Ahura has the added epithet of Mazda, the All-Wise. Hence *Ahura Mazda,* which is better known in its short form of Ormazd, the eternal and all-pervasive Holy Spirit.

Ormazd stands above and beyond good and evil. Ormazd is the Law and the Truth. Zoroaster is His guiding spirit, the vehicle being the revealed religion of Zoroastrianism.

Thus, though dualism is a persistent strain running through Zoroastrianism, the religion is beyond a shadow of doubt resplendent Monotheism. At times, when one wants to

emphasise the seven "amshashpands" (main holy spirits) and the "amesha spentas" (immortal holy ones), the concept of dualism and pluralism comes uppermost, but these are after all personifications of good spirits or ethical concepts, the only level at which the cognisant mind accepts them.

It is inconceivable that Zoroaster ever wanted to make the struggle between good and evil the basis of his revealed religion. He showed the path to dissolve the so-called antagonism in complete absorption in the "Good Mind" or the "Self" in Hindu terminology.

With insistence on dualism alone, Zoroastrianism would have gone to pieces long ago. Its survival through the shocks and stresses of existence reveals its eternal vitality, which is derived from the radiance of the Prophet. Plato calls Zoroaster "the son of Oromazdes". Plutarch speaks of the Prophet's dialogues with Divinity from a mountain-top.

Zoroastrianism was the religion of Persia in the heyday of its glory under Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes. Zoroastrianism invaded even the hitherto impregnable citadel of Greek classicism and it might have become, if the Greeks had not defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon, the religion of all Europe.

Zoroastrianism has been described as "the ruins of a religion". What survives is the Zend-Avesta, in three volumes; the Pahlavi Texts, nine in number; and the Nasks, 21 in number, containing the entire Zoroastrian literature of the Sassanian dynasty.

The part that survives, however, contains the direct teachings of Zoroaster. That, for the devout Zoroastrian, is more than enough!

. . . . . As a great fish swims along one bank of the river and then along the other bank, first the eastern bank and then the western, so the Spirit of man moves through both worlds, the waking world and the dream world.

Then as a falcon or an eagle, flying to and fro in the open sky and growing weary, folds his wings and sinks to rest, so of a truth the Spirit of man hastens to that world where, finding rest, he desires no desire and dreams no dream.

And whatever he has dreamed, as that he was slain or oppressed, crushed by an elephant or fallen into an abyss, or whatever fear he beheld in the waking world, he knows now that it was from ignorance. Like a god, like a king, he knows he is the All. This is his highest world.

This is his highest joy. He has passed beyond all evil.

The Spirit thinks not; yet thinking not, he thinks. For the energy that dwelt in thinking cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to think of.

— *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

THE VEDAPARAYANA

MAHANARAYANA UPANISHAD

This is the concluding portion of the Vedaparayana chanted at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan in the morning. This portion consists mostly of riks taken from the various sections of the Rigveda. Many of these riks may appear to be obscure. There are not many who can explain the symbolism that they are replete with.

Finer than the fine, vaster than the vast, the self hides in the secret heart of the creature ; when man is weaned from sorrow, purified in mind, then he beholds Him through Grace ; he sees the greatness of the Self-being.

The seven pranas (breaths) are born from Him and the seven flames and kinds of fuel and the seven tongues and these seven worlds in which move the life-breaths set within with the secret heart for their dwelling place —, seven and seven.

From Him arise the oceans and all these mountains and from Him flow rivers of all forms, and from Him are all plants and essences ; united with these the individual Soul dwells in creatures abiding in the subtle body.

Among Gods the Creator, among composers the Master of words, among the wise the Sage, among animals the Buffalo, among birds the Hawk, among tools the Axe, among the sacrifices the Soma, He transcends the purifying agencies with the help of Sound (Holy Chant).

One Unborn, red, white and black of hue, She begets profuse progeny in her likeness ; taking delight in her ; one unborn lies by her (jivas who are attached), the other unborn puts her away having taken the enjoyment. (those who are not attached).

Lo, the Sun whose dwelling is in the clear sky, He is the Vasu in the inter-regions, the fire of the sacrificial altar, and the Guest of the domestic hearth ; He shines in man and in the Gods as the Soul and His name is the law. He is all that is born of water and all that is born of earth and all that is born on the mountains. He is the Supreme Truth and He is the Mighty One.

Born of Him they are not other. There was nothing other than Him who entered all the worlds of His creation as their inmost Self. The Lord of creatures is one with the creature. He identifies Himself with the three luminaries imparting lustre to them, He is of sixteen parts.

We call the manifold sustainer, who gives us wealth in plenty, the Creator-Sun of divine vision.

I pour clarified butter into the consecrated Fire ; for this is his native lair, he is lodged in the light, the light is his plane. According to Thy Self-nature, bring the Gods and fill them with rapture. O Male of the herd, carry to them our offering made with the utterance of *swāhā*.

From the Supreme Fount vast as the Ocean rose up the Universe like waves of honey yielding delight to creatures ; that turned to immortality by mystic brooding. The secret Name of the Lustre is the tongue of the Gods, the navel of immortality.

May we repeat ever the Name luminous, bear it in the sacrifice with obeisances ; May the Creator hear our laud from near. The white four-horned One has revealed it.

Four are His horns, three His feet, heads two, arms seven ; bound triply the Bull roars, the mighty God has entered into the mortals.

Laid three-fold secretly held in the cave, the Light was discovered by the gods. Indra formed one, the visible world, Surya another, the world of dream ; from Vena came the third, the world of dreamless sleep.

He who is the first among the Gods before and above all, Rudra, the great Seer, behold him of the Golden Embryo being born before all. May He the God link us with the auspicious Knowledge.

Him beyond whom there is nothing higher, than whom there is none smaller, none greater, alone who stands immutable like a tree established in heaven, by Him, the Purusha, all this is pervaded.

Not by ritual, not by progeny, not by wealth, but by abandonment did some attain to Immortality. That which renouncers attain is laid beyond the heaven, yet it shines resplendent in the heart-cave.

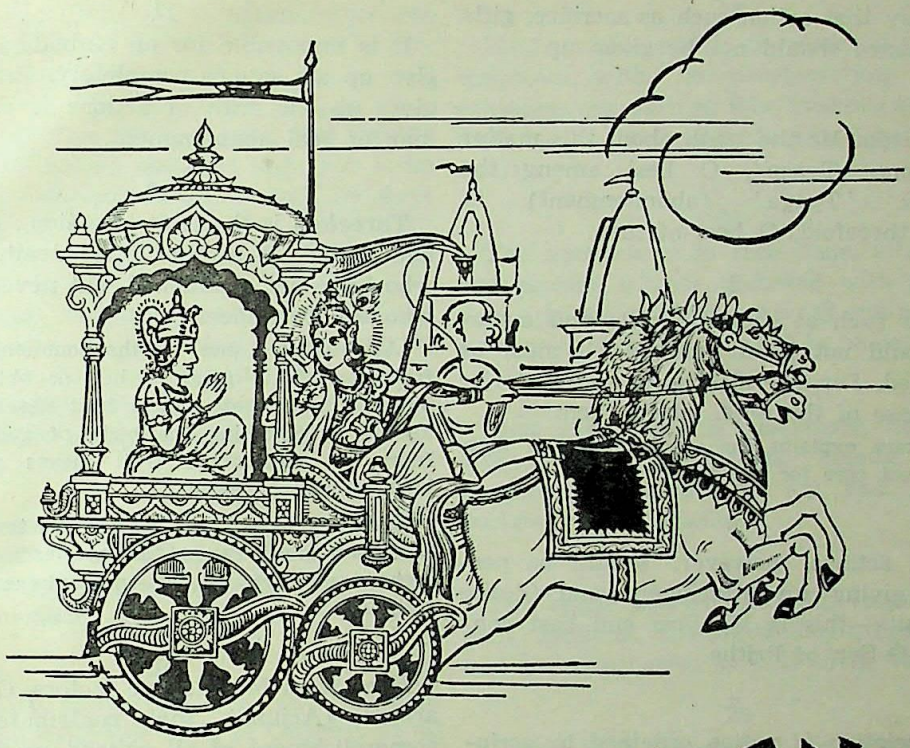
Ascetics who have made sure of the inner meaning of the whole knowledge of Vedanta, purified by the yoga of renunciation, all in the hour of their bodily dissolution, passing beyond death, are released into the world of Brahman.

Small, free from evil, dwelling of the Supreme, is the pure Lotus of the heart that is at the centre of the citadel (of the human body). Even there in that smallness is the sorrowless ether ; what is within it that is to be meditated upon.

He that is beyond the Sound that is uttered at the beginning of the Veda, that is established in the Upanishads, and which is dissolved in the primal cause, is the Supreme Lord.

Tao is eternally inactive, and yet it leaves nothing undone. If kings and princes could but hold fast to this principle, all things would work out their own reformation. The simplicity of the Nameless Tao brings about an absence of desire. The absence of desire gives tranquillity.

— *Tao Te King.*



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Arjuna said —

O (Lord) of mighty arms, I would like to know the true principle of 'Sannyasa' (renunciation) and that of 'Tyaga' (abandonment) separately, O Controller of senses and destroyer of Keshin.

(Keshin is the name of a demon killed by Sri Krishna. 'Sannyasa' and 'Tyaga' appear to be synonyms, but the Gita makes a subtle distinction between the two, as given in the next verse.)

2

Sri Bhagavan said —

Renouncing actions prompted by desire (for the enjoyment of the fruit), the wise understand to be 'Sannyasa'. The abandonment of the fruit of all actions they declare as 'Tyaga'.

(The meanings of these terms as given by the Gita are unorthodox. The Gita has used the old terms in a new sense.)

3

Some sages declare that action should be discarded as it leads to bondage; while

others say that action such as sacrifice, gifts and penance should not be given up.

4

Hear from Me the truth about this matter concerning 'Tyaga', O best among the Bharatas. 'Tyaga' (abandonment) is, indeed, threefold, O best of men.

5

Action such as sacrifice, gifts and austerity should not be abandoned; it must be performed. For, sacrifice, gifts and austerity in the case of the wise, purify them.

(Shankara explains the word 'wise' as those who do not care for the fruit!)

6

These actions, however, should be performed giving up attachment and (desire for) fruit — this is My firm and best conviction, O Son of Pritha.

7

Renunciation of action ordained by scriptures is not proper. Its abandonment out of ignorance is known to be tamasic.

(Shankara explains the word 'Niyata' in the original text as 'Nitya', meaning 'to be performed daily', of course, as prescribed by the scriptures. Jnaneshwara explains it as 'arising out of one's nature' i.e. 'natural to oneself', befitting the order and stage of life.)

8

One who abandons action as leading to misery, out of fear for the trouble it involves, does not receive the fruit of abandonment, which is of the rajasic type.

9

That abandonment is known as 'good' (Sattvic) which consists in performing the prescribed action out of a sense of duty, O Arjuna, giving up attachment and the (desire for) fruit.

10

He who neither hates a disagreeable action nor is attached to an agreeable one, who is imbued with the quality of goodness, who is possessed of intelligence and has his doubts dispelled is a man of sattvic abandonment.

11

It is impossible for an embodied being to give up all actions completely. But he who gives up the fruit of actions is declared a man of real abandonment.

12

Threefold is the fruit of action: evil, good and mixed. It accrues after death to those who have not abandoned, but never to those who are renouncers.

(According to most of the commentators, evil fruit consists in going to hell or obtaining the birth of animals etc.; good fruit lies in going to heaven or obtaining the birth of gods such as Indra etc. and mixed fruit means getting the birth of man on earth.

Shankara takes 'Atyagins' in the text to mean 'Karma-yogins' and 'Sannyasins' to mean 'renouncers' of all actions enjoined by the scriptures.)

13-14

Hear from Me the five factors, O Mighty-armed (Arjuna) that contribute to the accomplishment of all actions, as mentioned in the doctrine of the Vedanta (or samkhya):

The body, the agent, various instruments (such as sense-organs), various different functions and the fifth among these Providence.

(Shankara interprets 'Samkhya' as 'Vedanta'; Ramanuja explains it as 'that which is realised by the knowledge about the Vedic lore'; while Tilak and others understand it as 'Samkhya doctrine'.

'The different activities', according to Shankara and Jnaneshwara refer to the various manifestations of one power, e.g. wind, in the form of speech, movement of limbs, yawning, etc. 'Providence', they explain as the presiding deities of the Organs such as the Sun for the eyes etc. It may also mean 'destiny' or the unknown factor called 'luck' or 'fate'.)

15

Whatever action, either prescribed or prohibited, man does either through his body, speech or mind, requires these five causes.

16

Such being the case, a man of perverse understanding, who considers himself to be

the doer due to impure reason, does not (truly) see.

17

He who is free from egoism and whose mind is not stained does not slay, nor is he bound (by slaying) even though he slays all people.

18

Knowledge, object of knowledge and the Knower — are the threefold incentives to action; (while) instruments (or sense-organs), action and the agent — these are the threefold constituents of action.

19

Knowledge, action and the agent are said to be threefold according to the differences in modes (gunas), in the samkhya works. Hear Thou about them duly.

20

Know that knowledge to be sattvic which sees the imperishable state of Oneness in all beings, the undifferentiated among the different modalities.

21

Know that knowledge to be rajasic (passionate) which sees manifold different states among all beings through differentiation.

22

And that knowledge which clings to one effect (i.e. a part of creation) as if it were a whole, without consideration for the cause (i.e. origin), that which is without reality and limited, should be known as tamasic.

23

That action which is ordained by scriptures (or by the social and individual necessity), which is performed without attachment or aversion by one who does not seek fruit is known as sattvic (good).

24

And that action which is performed from egoism and with great strain by one who is desirous (of fruit) is declared to be rajasic (passionate).

25

That action which is undertaken from ignorance, with no consideration for the consequences, such as loss, violence and one's capacity to do it is declared to be tamasic (dull).

26

The agent who is free from attachment and egoism, who is endowed with firmness and strength or ability, who is equipoised in success or in failure is said to be sattvic.

27

That agent who is passionate, hankering after the fruit of actions, greedy, violent, impure and subject to joy and grief is declared to be rajasic.

28

The agent who is dissolute, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, wicked, indolent, despondent and procrastinating is said to be tamasic.

29

Listen to the threefold division of intellect and firmness, described to you according to the modes, thoroughly and distinctively, O Conqueror of Wealth.

30

That intellect, O son of Pritha, is sattvic which discerns activity and non-activity, what should be done and what should not be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and freedom.

31

That intellect, O son of Pritha, is rajasic which knows but incorrectly dharma (right conduct) and adharma (wrong conduct), what should be done and should not be done.

32

That intellect, O son of Pritha, is tamasic which being clouded by ignorance considers adharma to be dharma and all things perversely.

33

That unwavering firmness is sattvic, O son of Pritha, by which through yoga, one controls the activities of the mind, life-breath and sense-organs.

34

And that resoluteness, O son of Pritha, is rajasic, by which one upholds piety (dharma), Prosperity (artha) and desire (kama) expecting the fruit of action with great attachment.

35

That firmness, O son of Pritha, is tamasic, by which one of evil mind out of stupidity does not give up sleep, fear, grief, despondency and pride.

36

Now hear from Me the threefold happiness, O best among the Bharatas, in which by practice one finds delight and ends misery.

37

That happiness is known as sattvic resulting from the clarity of intellect by meditation on the Self, which is like poison at the beginning (but) like nectar at the end.

38

That happiness is declared as rajasic which, to start with is like nectar on account of contact of objects with the sense-organs, but is like poison at the end.

39

That happiness is known as tamasic which is born of sleep, indolence and negligence, which both at the beginning and at the end stupefies the mind.

40

There is no existence either on this earth or in heaven among the gods, which is free from the three modes born of Prakriti.

41

Duties of the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, O tormentor of foes, are divided according to the qualities inherent in their nature.

(Swabhava, translated as 'nature' above, may mean, says Shankara, Prakriti constituting three modes.)

42

Serenity, control of the senses or self-restraint, austerity, (outward and inward) purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, knowledge, wisdom and faith (in God and scriptures) — these are the duties of the Brahmanas according to their nature.

43

Heroism, fearlessness, steadfastness, alertness, not fleeing from battle, charity and lordliness — these are the duties of the Kshatriyas natural to them.

44

Cultivation of land, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas, born of their nature. Service is the duty of a Shudra natural to him.

(It must be well remembered here that there is no reference to caste determined by birth in the Gita. What is given is the fourfold division of society according to the respective qualities natural to men. Even this division is not rigid. It is a part of the contemporary social order, and must be taken in that light. It should in no way be used as a defence for the caste system based on birth today in India.)

45

Man attains highest Perfection being ever engaged in his own duty. Listen how a man engaged in his duty attains success.

(Shankara interprets 'Siddhi' in the original as 'a State congenial and precedent to Perfection, i.e. the purification of the mind and the senses.' It does not mean perfection or liberation itself.)

46

Man attains perfection by performing his duty as worship of Him, from whom all creatures are born and by whom all this is pervaded.

47

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well executed. One incurs no sin by performing one's duty ordained by nature.

48

One should not abandon one's natural duty, O son of Kunti, though full of defects. All actions are covered with defects, like fire with smoke.

49

One whose mind is unattached, controlled and free from desire attains the highest state of Perfection in Brahman by Sannyasa (renunciation).

50

Know from Me in brief, O son of Kunti, how a man, who has attained perfection, realizes Brahman, — which is the highest consummation of the yoga of wisdom.

51-53

One endowed with extremely pure reason, controlled in mind by steadfastness and abandoning objects of senses such as sound etc., dispelling attachment and aversion, resorting to a solitary place, eating little, speech, body and mind subdued always engages in the yoga of meditation and is dispassionate leaving aside egoism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and greed, free from the feeling of 'mine' and full of peace, he is fit for becoming One with Brahman.

54

Becoming One with Brahman, the serene self neither grieves nor desires. Treating all alike, he attains the highest devotion to Me.

55

Through devotion he knows Me and My nature in truth and (thus) knowing Me in truth (or in essence) he forthwith enters into Me.

56

And he, performing all actions with Me as his refuge and support, through My grace attains the eternal and imperishable abode.

57

Mentally surrendering all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme, always concentrating your mind on Me, fix your heart ever on Me.

58

With mind reposed in Me, you will cross over all the difficulties through My grace; but if you do not hear Me through egotism, you will perish.

59

If out of egotism you decide not to fight, this resolve of yours is in vain (or futile). Nature (Prakriti) will compel you to fight.

60

That which you do not wish to perform from delusion, O son of Kunti, bound as you are by your duty inherent in your nature, you shall do even against your will.

61

The Lord resides in the hearts of all, O Arjuna, revolving all creatures by Prakriti as if mounted on a machine.

62

Surrender unto Him with all your heart, O Bharata. Through His grace you will attain supreme peace and the perennial abode.

63

This wisdom, the secret of secrets, I have divulged to you. Reflect over this thoroughly and act as you please.

64

Listen again to My Supreme Word, the most secret of all. I shall tell you what is beneficial to you as you are My beloved and firm friend.

65

Fix your thought on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me and bow down to Me. Indeed (thus) you will reach Me. This I truly promise to you, (as) you are dear to Me.

66

Leaving aside all dharmas, surrender to Me, as your sole Refuge. I shall relieve you of all (your) sins; do not grieve.

('Dharmas' refer to the rules of conduct based on social morality as given in the smriti works or minor Shastras. They are conventional and have a relative and temporal value. These cannot be relied upon as eternal and hence authentic and final. Shankara and Jnaneshwara include even the 'adharmas', the traditional prohibitory rules in 'dharmas'. The real universal Law of conduct, the real 'Dharma' is stated here in preference to the minor conventional dharmas. It is the Dharma

of 'Surrender', recommended by sages — ancient and modern — as testified to by their lives.)

67

This (secret), you should never preach to a man without austerity and devotion, neither to one unwilling to listen, nor to one who speaks ill of Me.

('Cast not pearls before swine' says the Bible).

68

One who, with ardent devotion to Me, will impart this supreme secret to My devotees shall undoubtedly come to Me.

69

And no one else among men does more loving service to Me than he; and no one else shall be dearer to Me than he in this world.

70

One who will study this sacred dialogue between us two, will please Me as if by worshipping Me with the sacrifice of wisdom; this is My conviction.

71

Also one full of faith and free from malice (to Me), who even listens (to this) will be liberated and will attain to the auspicious worlds of the righteous.

72

Did you hear this, O son of Pritha, with one-pointed (or whole) attention? Has the delusion of your ignorance completely vanished, O Dhananjaya?

73

Arjuna said:

The delusion is dispelled; the awareness (of the Self) I have gained, through your Grace, O Achyuta. I stand free from doubt. I shall do as you bid.

74

Sanjaya said:

Thus have I heard this marvellous dialogue between Vasudeva (Krishna) and the high-souled son of Pritha, which thrilled me to the very depth of my soul.

75

Through the grace of Vyasa, I could listen to this Supreme secret, the yoga, from the Lord of yoga Himself as He narrated it in person.

(Vyasa, the celebrated author of the Mahabharata, graciously imparted a supernatural Eye to Sanjaya, so that he could see and hear all that was going on in the holy war, even though at a distance.)

76

O King, recollecting now and then this marvellous holy dialogue of Keshava (Krishna) and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

77

And remembering constantly that most marvellous form of Hari (Krishna), great is my wonder, O king, and I rejoice again and again.

78

Wherever is Krishna the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Pritha's son, the archer: there are also the goddess of wealth, victory, prosperity and eternal righteousness. So I deem.

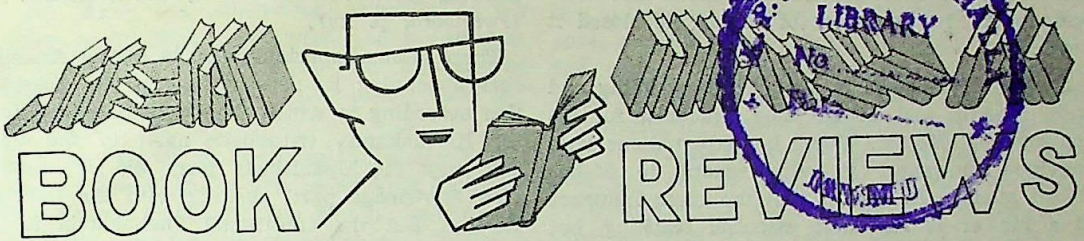
(Krishna is the symbol of Siva, the Lord of Yoga, while Arjuna with bow and arrow is the symbol of Shakti, the Prakriti. Their union is the source of material and spiritual glory.)

Here ends *The Bhagavad Gita* with the Eighteenth chapter entitled

"The Yoga of Liberation and Surrender."

This is the last and most inspiring revelation of

The Bhagavad Gita.



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SRI MAHARSHI'S WORDS OF GRACE: Published by T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, pp. 68. Price Rs. 2, postage extra.

Words of Grace: Flow from the exposition of replies by Sri Bhagavan to questions put to Him by three of the earliest devotees in: *Who Am I?*, *Self Enquiry* and *Spiritual Instruction*.

All the three works appear also in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*.

Words of Grace have a propensity of becoming progressively alive with time the more one reads them which amounts to hearing them when they come from the lips of a Master — a Jnani, with all the power that this implies, not being subject to time.

THE GOD-MAN: By C. B. Purdom, Allen & Unwin. Pages 463. Price: 42s.

Meher Baba is a very controversial figure. Up to the age of 19 he was a normal youth with no particular spiritual interest. Then an aged woman beggar-saint of Bombay, Babajan by name, imposed her influence on him by means of an embrace. The effect was so overwhelming as to unhinge his mind and for nine years he was deranged. He visited four other gurus during this time, but he was 28 before mental normalcy returned.

When it did he declared himself the Avatara or Messiah of the age and began to take disciples. He insisted on absolute, uncritical obedience. Shortly afterwards he renounced first speech and then writing and communicated only by spelling words out on an alphabet board. He shows full doctrinal understanding of Advaita, although he does not always speak from this viewpoint; he has also a keen practical mind for matters of administration and organization. Furthermore he makes a powerful impression on many people who meet him, though not all — Paul Brunton, for instance, who devoted a chapter to him in his 'Search in Secret India' was not convinced.

Psychiatrists may perhaps query whether he ever did recover full mental normalcy. One feature which will seem significant to them is his constant preoccupation with himself and his greatness — I am an Avatara, I am the Messiah, I am Christ, I am the Highest of the High, I tell you with my divine authority, and so on. Another characteristic is changeability coupled with intolerance of the slightest opposition or disobedience. He would make detailed plans for every stage of a journey and then, without assigning any reason, change or cancel it at the last moment. He would pour immense energy into the founding and fostering of some institution and then suddenly abandon it. He would go into seclusion for a stated period but change his mind and come out earlier. Even while in 'seclusion' he had to have attendants constantly posted outside his room and they would hear him, Mr. Purdom tells us, pacing up and down all night, whereas one would have expected some one who had attained Peace rather to be sitting in contemplation. Similarly, one who has attained has nothing more to anticipate, whereas Meher Baba's life seems to have been a chain of significant dates fixed by him in advance when he was going to enter upon some new phase of life or to break his silence.

Not only is this restlessness puzzling but, as Mr. Purdom admits, he puts a great strain on his followers and "in quarrels among his followers Baba may not immediately attempt to restore harmony but allow discord to develop, even provoke it." (P. 437)

It is a known phenomenon for people to become divinely mad, as Meher Baba did in his early years, with experience of ecstasy but unable to adapt themselves to human life. Such people have an extraordinary fascination for Meher Baba. For a large part of his life his main activity was touring India in search of them. He would wash them, clothe them, feed them, sit in meditation with them, and then, with his usual inconsequence, let them go again without trying to carry the treatment through to a cure. At one

time he even built a Home for them, but after some years, for no apparent reason, he closed it down.

Mr. Purdom shows doctrinal understanding and wide reading and is an able apologist for his controversial Master. Where his explanations least convince, however, is with regard to Meher Baba's silence. He argues that the silent influence of a Master is his most essential teaching, but that is not to the point. A Master can transmit a silent influence and still talk about mundane matters. He refers to the silence of Bodhidharma, the first Ch'an Patriarch of China, but that also is not to the point, for Bodhidharma was turning his back on mundane affairs, while Meher Baba is not. A vow of silence is not uncommon in one who renounces the world, and indeed it can act as a protection against disturbances, but for most of his life Meher Baba was extremely active in the organization and administration of his institutions, in travelling and in giving interviews and instructions, and through all this he imposed on himself and others the inconvenience of guessing his meaning from what he spelled out on an alphabet board. There is also the difficulty that, as Mr. Purdom points out, his published expositions of doctrine and cosmology can only be considered approximately his, since they were not actually written by him. And all his life he has been declaring that he will speak soon and that when he does it will be a world-shattering event. At the age of over 70, he was still saying so.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

SUPARNA: The Integral Unity of Vedic Outlook: By Sri E. Ananthacharya. Published by Bharadwaja Ashram, Vijayavada-2. 1962. Pages 303. Price: Rs. 10.

Writing the Introduction of the book in 1962, Professor Vasudeva Sarana Agrawala of Banaras Hindu University described the subject as *Srishti Vidya*, the lore of creation. He complained that our modern translations of the Rigveda had failed to discover any systematic metaphysical exposition behind the Mantras. He named leading oriental scholars of the West and said that they hardly touched 'the fringe of the problem, viz. the understanding of the deep cosmogonic truths as expressed by the Rishi'. The author of SUPARNA, who makes an attempt to solve this problem, complains about the limitations of the traditional Indian attitude too. "For a long period", he says, "our thoughts were engaged only in the polemics of Theology, Logic and Philosophy as abstract subjects and vague topics, dubbing (the) Veda as merely materialistic . . ." (*Foreword*, p. xv).

There is one important point in Pandit Anantha-charya's study: he does not accept the classification according to which the Vedic Samhitas form the Karmakanda (ritualistic part) of the Veda, and only the Upanishads form the Jnanakanda (the knowledge part) dealing with the Ultimate Reality. But the traditional Jnanakanda is not his subject. "The aim of the book", says the author, "is to bring to the notice of sympathetic minds some of the hints in the Rigveda of the system of scientific thought of which the basis is Vedic wisdom, expressed as the poetic testament of Rics and Samas" (*Foreword*, xiv).

The name of the book, 'Suparna', literally means 'the finewinged (Bird)' and symbolises the Deity. The author finds in the Vedic concept of Suparna "a grand formula to express the whole truth of the unity of existence in the three stages of Prithivi, Antariksha and Diva, all representing his (i.e. the Bird Suparna's) three states of development in the egg, in his flight in the atmosphere, and his ascent into Heaven to fight for the Amritha of Soma" (p. 149). "Mycroscopically", says the author elsewhere, "the three developing stages of Suparna represent the stages of man in the embryo, in the growing energy of youth and in parenthood" (p. 150). He discovers an evolutionary process through which Suparna attains 'the stage of Savita' in the third region where he fights Vritra, the first-born serpent (*ahi*. p. 150), and thereafter reaches 'the fourth region of Brahmanaspati where wisdom reigns supreme'. Speaking of the evolution of the sun into Savita, the author says: "If the sun is the son of creation, Savitha is the creator of all the universe of men and gods" (p. 118).

The author finds Karmakanda or Yajna merging in Jnanakanda and forming the background of Vedic culture. As such Yajna is 'both a concept and a ritual'. We may refer to the Yajurveda (Vs. 9. 31) where it is prayed that Yajna (as ritual) may flourish through Yajna (as the concept of Yajna, the idea of renunciation). Waters (Apah) too have a conceptual significance. In the Vedas they are 'oceans containing the powers of Devas functioning in Yajna' (p. 65). The Waters 'do not come under the category of five elements, they are the very creative flood waters of knowledge, the inner life-current of all existence projecting out from the heart of the ultimate Agni as the great ocean of . . . wisdom' (p. 66). "Reality, then, is an immense ocean of infinitely potential waters of knowledge capable of expressing itself in a variety of ways"

(p. 67). Agni, the integrating principle, is the primary power that could effect the transformation of offerings in the Yajna 'for the sake of raising the status of man to that of the seers and of Devas too' (p. 119).

With the help of his formulae the author builds up out of the Vedas a new mythology, carrying a new allegorical significance. But in order to be thoroughly accepted, his formulae will have to be more fully explained, and his mythology, which appears to be nearer the Puranik legend than Vedic symbology, will have more clearly to establish its relevance to the Vedic texts. His philology too needs to be more convincing as, for instance, when he identifies the Vedic word *amiva* with *amoeba* (p. 117).

Whether one agrees with the author or not, one cannot ignore the fact that great learning and dedicated work have gone to the writing of the book. Even if his thesis is only partially accepted, there will have to be much rethinking about the deeper significance of the four Vedas, especially the Rigveda.

PROF. A. C. BOSE.

THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE: By Christmas Humphreys. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1969. Pages 224. Price: 40sh.

This book is composed of twenty-eight essays on all aspects of Buddhism, written by the President of the Buddhist Society, founded by him in 1924. He is the author of more than a dozen works on the subject, authoritative and of international repute. These twenty-eight essays cover the many aspects of Buddhism from different angles, and may be said to represent the conclusions of the greater part of a lifetime consecrated to the subject. Many of the chapters are crowned by short poems which render the essence of the teaching in a manner which is both valuable and memorable.

It is not often that we have an opportunity of reading a book of studies in Buddhism based on such deep knowledge and experience, and expressed with such command of the medium; indeed, occasionally, one may be so fascinated by the power of expression invoked that the subject itself temporarily assumes a secondary importance. It would be difficult to do justice to such a book, for the only applicable form of justice is to read it.

The book is written by a distinguished Buddhist for Buddhists and prospective Buddhists, and is therefore concerned with Buddhism as a religion. This implies that it is based on Relativity, and that it accepts entities as such for practical purposes and tells them about what they should do, and what Buddhism should do for them, as apparent entities in their daily lives seeking volitionally for 'enlightenment'. Yet, at the same time Buddhism, in its metaphysical aspect, reveals that there can be none such and that 'enlightenment' is only a word for what ultimately they are. As with 'space' and 'time', the author, of course, knows this and refers to it often, but this imcompatibility of the means and the end can seem to be embarrassing to the reader. No doubt it may be necessary and inevitable in such a book, and we can enjoy and benefit by it from the point of view from which it is written, whether the author is discussing phenomena as though they were virtual entities or whether he is revealing their inexistence as anything but appearance. However disconcerting this apparent antimony may be, it should quite certainly not deter us from enjoying and benefitting by such a profound and wide-spread dissection which lays bare all the principal aspects of the vast and varied Buddhist religion. Many readers will, and should, read and re-read some of the short and brilliant chapters several times and with increasing pleasure, as has this reviewer.

In general written objectively — as an act of worship to the popular idol called 'Objectivity' — the book nevertheless helps to reveal what the Buddha and all the Sages revealed, i.e. that by Subjectivity alone can we apperceive what virtually we are.

With courage and lucidity the author, in a short chapter entitled "World Buddhism", treats of political Buddhism as practised in present South Asia. Not only all genuine Buddhists but all men of metaphysical understanding, of whatever form or religion, will profoundly agree, and for which lucid statement they will be sincerely grateful.

One strange misapprehension appears regularly, i.e. an apparent lack of apperception of the difference between 'volition' which is the functional aspect of an I-concept, seeking personal satisfaction, and the basic urge towards reintegration which is purely noumenal in origin. Both may appear as forms of 'desire', but the one is relative and the other is absolute, in origin from 'below' and from 'above' respectively; the one is an egotic 'defense' against reintegration, whereas the other is a summons to integrate.

One may ask: do phenomena 'struggle up a mountain' in order to become all-which-they-are, or does all-which-they-are come to meet them, each step being necessarily mutual, as when we approach our image in a mirror?

Neither — for there are not two of us, and each step is that of both. "Every conceivable thing", he says, p. 163, "visible and invisible, *is* every other conceivable thing. All distinctions are falsely imagined. The human mind cannot take that in as a thought, and yet one has to know it to be true." No matter what "that" may be, what "cannot be taken in as thought" cannot be 'taken in' solely because 'that' is not extended in space-time whereas 'thought' is, and as long as space-time is accepted as an objective fact nothing which is not objectifiable can be 'taken in'. When space-time is recognised as subjective there is nothing left to be 'taken in' and no 'where' to take anything into! Whatever 'that' may have been will then be found as necessarily as obviously, to be what-we-are who are "knowing it to be true".

As also: "We learn nothing: we only become aware of what we know". For mind, apperceiving, is open to immanent Truth which is transcendent, which is wholeness, which is pure 'Subjectivity'. But quotations might be endless. The author has a superb chapter on "The Buddhist Conception Of Immanence", which perhaps is the finest and most essential chapter in the book.

What, perhaps, is most open to criticism metaphysically, which is doctrinally, in this book is that nearly always there is a 'we' involved in every problem and in its solution. But, in fact, there is no 'we', never was and never will be, and that surely is all there could be to teach or to learn? In fact, however, the author sits in turn all round the Buddhist table, with happy disregard of the contradictions involved. But these apparent contradictions are ineluctably to be found in the diverse teachings of the religion itself, all of which has, with gay disregard of logic, been attributed to the Buddha himself, whereas this would have needed at least half-a-dozen Buddhas.

Regrettably, the author perpetuates the historically exploded illusion that the Japanese development called Zen, with its considerable virtues and originality, is the same as the Ch'an of the Masters of China, which latter is in-formed with the Taoism of Lao Tze and Chuang Tze, and is more ancient than the school of the Lanka-monk Bodhidharma.

Pernickety Buddhists might have liked a little Madhiamaka (Nagarjuna, Arya Devi, Candrakirti) or Seng Chao, and perhaps less reliance on the "Voice Of The Silence" for it may be questioned to what extent Theosophy, despite isolated and admirable quotations, constitutes a suitable basis for such forms of Buddhism as Ch'an or Zen, or indeed for Buddhism as such at all. Also a little more Ch'an and a good deal less Zen might have been appreciated by some readers; and the misuse of the word 'Zen' for what is only pure Ch'an is always to be regretted, since it is based on long-past ignorance of the latter. But are we readers all Buddhists and should Buddhists be pernickety? 'Are we readers *all* Buddhists?' This is not an idle question. Perhaps we are, i.e. Buddhists *qui s'ignorent* (who are unaware of what they are). Might it not perhaps be difficult not to be a 'Buddhist' if one has any metaphysical insight at all? No form of religion or belief could ever have a monopoly of apperception of what-we-are, so that a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi might perhaps call himself, or be called, also a 'Buddhist' — and who would be *the last* to object? Surely he would?

When the feast is so abundant and the *chef* a Cordon Bleu — let us all do justice to such a splendid repast.

It is both a privilege and a pleasure to review, or to attempt to review, a work of such scope and quality.

JAMES STANNUS.

THEORY OF AUTODEISM: By Alberto Cernuschi, Philosophical Library, New York, U.S.A.

The author's scientific and philosophical investigations into the perpetual quest of man to know the purpose of his existence who he is, whence he comes and where he is going "the eternal torment of man to define God" culminated in the "Theory of Autodeism". Man's possibilities are potentially unlimited and at the end of his evolutionary chain there might actually be God-hood. The author deals with this quest from the standpoint of (one could almost say) a metaphysical scientist which is a contradiction in terms reflected later on. As he so aptly points out philosophers have deceived man. They do not answer the primordial question, they do not even attempt to solve the enquiry "Who am I?" but lose themselves in dialectics, subtle details and erudition which could explain everything except the intrinsic question.

According to the author man's evolution in the physical shell is nearing its last stage which the interminable chain of non-material beings should begin which means a new cycle of beings liberated from the shackles of their physical form and ending in God-hood. This brings to mind an intermediary image of gods and demi-gods as reflected in the Greek mythology and the Hindu pantheon. The period of the life of the soul bound to the body is compared to the period of

pregnancy when the life of the yet unborn human being is totally linked to that of the mother. Just as a new-born child commences its separate life outside the maternal body after the period of incubation is over so man freed from his body enters a new cycle of disembodied independent existence. Billions of years of evolution will be needed for completion of the cycle which conducts Man to God. Why wait billions of years? Every day people are being liberated from the shackles of their bodies and if, as the author says, not being able to resort to complicated apparatus and calculations we can only try to arrive at an explanation of the reasons for our existence and its goal by observation, comparison and deduction, then we might logically just as well presume that the disembodied independent existence begins with discarding the body or in simple parlance with death of the body. We do not know what our state was before we were born nor after we die, we only know the middle part of it; our existence on earth linked to the body. Soon we may have at our disposal a cerebral Geiger counter and science is already on the road to the classification of the waves transmitted by the human brain but can one really presume that it is possible to place eternal energy in this category of forces? A spiritual force is a better denomination though the author uses it with some hesitation.

The author's intuitive understanding in his theory of Autodeism identifying Man with God in an evolutionary chain in ontological-metaphysical terms is nearer to the gnosis of seers who have realized the Truth. "Be still and know that I AM God" or that God is "I AM". Hindu seers proclaim there is only the Self — God — Brahman and we are That only we do not know it. What has to be discarded is the ignorance, the illusion hiding this truth. Ibn Arabi says: "In the beginning there was Allah and nothing beside Him and now He is as He was", Then "Who am I?" This, of course, is contradiction to the affirmation of the author that "even those who have spent effort and struggle penetrating into the metaphysical world and those who have dedicated their lives to meditation, all without exception, have arrived at the conclusion that there are things which we shall never understand . . ." The one-pointed determined efforts of those who devote their lives to meditation and spiritual striving are not always fruitless. This is borne out rationally by saints and seers in various ages and belonging to various races who have realized their true state of Oneness with God and even by spiritual aspirants (in Hindu terminology sadhakas) who may have had a glimpse of ultimate Truth or Realization. They all speak the same language in trying to describe the indescribable, a state beyond the confines of the limited mind. Shankara says in his commentary on Kenopanishad I.3.: "The truth of Brahman cannot be seized by our senses or by the mind. Reason, intellect can grasp and understand in a way things that are finite. But what is infinite escapes from their hold. They are at sea when confronted with the Infinite for it transgresses on all sides the bounds set by reasoning intelligence for factual validity. What little it can grasp and interpret in its conceptual mould turns out often to be not merely inadequate but often false when it is faced with a larger vista of the Reality. Brahman cannot be known by the mind; . . . It yields itself to knowledge through faculties other than the mental as they are developed. So Brahman cannot be described even as the unknown. It is beyond the knowing and the unknown of the mind." It is possible for man to go beyond his senses and mind to discover its source and know who he really is. It is enough if even one succeeds amongst thousands striving.

The book makes interesting reading as we watch the author's endeavour to "crack the shell of verbal artifice to seek the seed of meaning."

SACRED ART IN EAST AND WEST: By Titus Burckhardt. Translated from French by Lord Northbourne. Perennial Books, London. Pp. 160. Price: 35sh.

The author who has devoted many years of his life to the study of traditional lore in its varied aspects and has several books to his credit writes with great erudition on the principles and methods of traditional art conveying the distinctive qualities and basic unity of each of the five great traditions i.e. Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Far-Eastern. He is particularly lucid in his artistic elaborations on the iconography and symbolical relationship of the Romanesque church portal and their counterparts in other traditions. A door reflects esoterically a passage from one world to another, the niche is a form of the "Holy of Holies", the inner sanctum the place of the epiphany of God be it with an image or an abstract symbol or void "the superimposed symbolism must conform to the symbolism inherent in the object". "I am the door . . ." applies to every true Guru. Art helps to preserve the character of a given civilization particularly traditional art which is founded on symbolism

It has meaning as an expression of the divine manifested in the world of forms. Its symbolic aspect is given great prominence here making clear the relation between the fundamental symbols of the circle, square and cube in relation to each other and their varying meaning according to the plane of reference with particular mention of mandalas and geometrical diagrams. Coming back to portals in one of the 8 entrances of the temple of Arunachaleswara in Tiruvannamalai, figures are carved in bas-relief at the base of the columns, bent as if groaning under the weight of the columns supporting the temple. Ramana Maharshi used to refer to these figures saying that we are just as unnecessarily bent and groaning under the weight and cares of our worldly life.

The illustrations are excellent. Particularly beautiful is the reproduction of a page of an Egyptian Koran of the XIVth century Plate X and of a Taoist painting of a mountain landscape attributed to Fan K'uan Period of the Sung Dynasty reflecting the divine attribute of perfect beauty.

As a title of the book "Traditional Art" might be more apt than "sacred". For art to be truly sacred the artist has to forget not only all symbolism but himself also. He becomes nothing but an instrument, he is inspired and reflects in a state of "bhava" the Divine Perfection most directly and effortlessly. When he is conscious of his individuality as an artist in particular and the world of symbolism in general it puts a stamp on his work. To see things as they truly are all symbolism must be forgotten said Meister Eckhart. The author comes particularly near it when he writes: "Engrossment by the mind more exactly by interested and anxious thought, prevents the instinctive faculties of the soul from unfolding in all their original generosity". Unfortunately the mind may get engrossed with symbolism also. After all is not all manifestation a series of reflections and symbols from the highest to the lowest state?

The author writes: "The method of dhyana, which finds its direct reflection in art, comprises an aspect that has given rise to many false assimilations: namely the part played in it by the unconscious or more precisely 'non-conscious' modalities of the soul". Even if we do not confuse the "consciousness" of dhyana Buddhism with the "sub-conscious" of modern psychologists, the true nature of being could not be described as "non-conscious" whatever it may include "by virtue of a certain symbolical relationship". According to the experiences of sages, of various races in different ages and glimpses of realization of the true state of those still striving the true nature of Being is pure Consciousness or I-am-ness. Being is I AM. Consciousness is I AM. This is born out even rationally. Sages and those who have had only a glimpse of realization speak the same baffled language in trying to describe the undescribable. "Words turn away baffled" when the mind tries to describe what goes beyond the mind, yet somehow Truth it comes through.

GLEANINGS FROM THE UPANISHADS: By M. P. Pandit. Published by Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Asram, Pondicherry. Price: Rs. 10.

The Upanishads are among the most ancient teachings that the world still possesses. 108 of them are recognised by tradition to be genuine. Based on the Vedas they are a continuation and elucidation of their spiritual inner meaning in terms better suited to later ages. Many are interested to know what they have to say to us particularly as the truth contained in the Vedas is expounded and enlarged upon by various seers from various points of view suited to the mentality and development of the seeker. These Masters would naturally emphasise their own paths yet all are based on the knowledge and mystic doctrine that was the essence of the Vedas, all leading to the same Truth, back to the Source. Their different aspects and contradictions are relevant and fuse in the one supreme Reality.

The selections from the entire range of the 12 major and the remaining minor Upanishads chosen with the erudition and mastery characteristic of Mr. M. P. Pandit are a delight to read and should find an echo in the heart of those who seek Reality. They show how to achieve the purpose of our life.

Mr. Pandit has done a great service to those, who have not the leisure or opportunity to go through all the Upanishads, by gleaning from them the essential variegated ways of approach to the one Truth and giving much needed encouragement and solace to the weary, sadhana being often a succession of ups and downs. They reveal the manysided secret ways "of the flowing of man to God and God to man".

This reviewer was captivated by the very first selection from Is'a Upanishad particularly by the commentary:

"The universe is a manifestation of the Divine, out of Delight, ananda, for Delight. The Divine pervades all and takes the delight of all. All that

forms part of this manifestation is intended to participate in this delight. But this enjoyment of life is missed by man because he separates himself in his consciousness from the rest and takes his stand on an ego which feels itself different from others . . . . Give up this ego-sense of possession, the personal claim to acquire and hold . . . Once that is done you are admitted into the universal play of delight that is divine. For you have recovered your true poise . . . "

SHAKINAH.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL ANNUAL (Vols. 2 & 3) Pub. Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras-5. Price: Rs. 10 each.

These volumes are a standing testimony to the solid work that is being done by the Centre, under the guidance of Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, in the field of Indian Philosophy and Social Thought. In the main they contain papers read out or submitted at the various Seminars conducted by the Centre during 1966-1967.

In the Proceedings of the Seminar on Indian Philosophy and Social Concern, there is a lively discussion on the subject whether there is any social concern at all in such a Philosophy as the Indian which is dominated by the shadow of Maya. Of course it goes without saying that once Philosophy is admitted to be but a province (of statement to the intellect) of spiritual thought and experience, the question cannot arise at all. For with the purification and subtilisation of consciousness that are the first steps of any spiritual life, there is a spontaneous identification with the inner life of the environment and the pleasures and sufferings of others impinge upon the seeker in an urgent manner and his enlarged being responds with helpful waves of Love and support. To such a one, says the Upanishad, all beings yearn.

What is Maya? Is it a power of illusion or a Force of manifestation? Or is it both? What is the meaning of metaphysics and what is its role in human Thought? Does metaphysics describe the Reality or does it point to It? These are the questions discussed in two other Seminars.

The Concept of Progress forms the subject of another Seminar. Is progress real or illusory? Is it linear or cyclical? Is the character of the collective progress the same as that of the individual? Progress is indeed spherical; it appears to turn round and round, but while doing each round it moves up automatically. In a larger perspective, there is an unmistakable movement of *total* progress, whatever may be local or temporary appearances here and there.

All through the pages of these volumes the humane and understanding spirit of Dr. Mahadevan's mind is felt like a soothing zephyr.

M. P. PANDIT.

ZOROASTER'S INFLUENCE ON ANAXAGORAS, THE GREEK TRAGEDIANS, AND SOCRATES: By Ruhi Muhsen Afnan, Philosophical Library, New York. Pp. 161. Price: $10.

This book, a sequel to the author's "ZOROASTER'S INFLUENCE ON GREEK THOUGHT", follows the same close line of reasoning as in the earlier publication but with special reference to Anaxagoras and the famed Athenian representatives of the Illumination — Socrates, Euripides and Thucydidis.

It is not an easy matter to compare a revealed religion with a mere school of philosophy, however classical or renowned it may be, but Afnan acquits himself of this task by putting the appositeness in its widest historical perspective and by signalising "the primary premises of thought" on which both Zoroastrianism and ancient Greek culture rest.

The parallel is drawn, by close and cogent sequence of thought, between the revealed religion of the Gatha Hymns and the classic system of Greek philosophy that followed.

Media, in Persia, was the birthplace of Zoroaster, and his religion was initially named Medism before it was named after the Prophet himself. God is visualised in Medism as the universal "Mind".

Thus, for the first time in the region of its propagation, was enunciated a spiritual and universalistic outlook on life. No doubt, to this propagation, the radiance of the Prophet himself contributed largely.

Zoroaster visualised chief among the attributes of perfection the Good Mind. Afnan's citation is most pointed: "Then did I realise Thee as the most Bountiful One, O Mazda Ahura, when the Good Mind encircles me completely." (*Yasna* 43:11).

Thus Zoroaster was the one-thought seer, the one thought being Ahura Mazda. No wonder, he was a Prophet.

Afnan points out that "divinest" Athenian attributes closely correspond to the Amesha Spentas of Zoroaster. The Amesha Spentas are the Good Mind, Divine Law or Justice, the Law's Might and Majesty, Divine Devotion, Perfection and Immortality.

In the course of his historical sweep, Afnan points the way to the entry of Anaxagras in Athens and the founding of his school of thought there a full century after the first percolation of Zoroaster's influence in this eclectic sanctuary of classic thought.

Zoroaster spoke of the "Good Mind", Anaxagoras of the 'Mind' or Nous. But the 'Mind' of Anaxagoras is not a mere psychological term. 'Mind', according to him, is "the unmoved mover of all things, the initial source of all power and potentialities, the efficient cause of creation and Law and Order."

Socrates, too, speaks of the ideas of "The Good, The True, The Just and The Beautiful". Euripides and Thusydidis enacted in tragic plays concepts which Socrates enunciated in straight dialectics.

Anaxagoras was condemned to death for his preachings, but escaped from Athens with the help of Pericles. Socrates was forced to drink hemlock and end his life. Both were "impious" men whose philosophy ran counter to Greek classicism narrowly viewed. Thus has noble thought been persecuted through the ages.

Afnan is eminently lucid and readable. The two books make instructive reading to show the common ground between a revealed religion and a culture passionately pre-occupied with the search for the eternal verities of life.

In fact, Greek culture was so imbued with the thought of the Absolute that Greek philosophers, with the infinite grace which they only knew, told man to be humble and know that, just as he is looking for the Absolute, the Absolute is also looking for him.

In other words, the searcher, the search and what is sought are One — the idea of the Upanishads. Naturally, such a philosophy was fertile ground for the word of the Prophet, the nearest in time and place to enter.

G. R. KAPADIA.

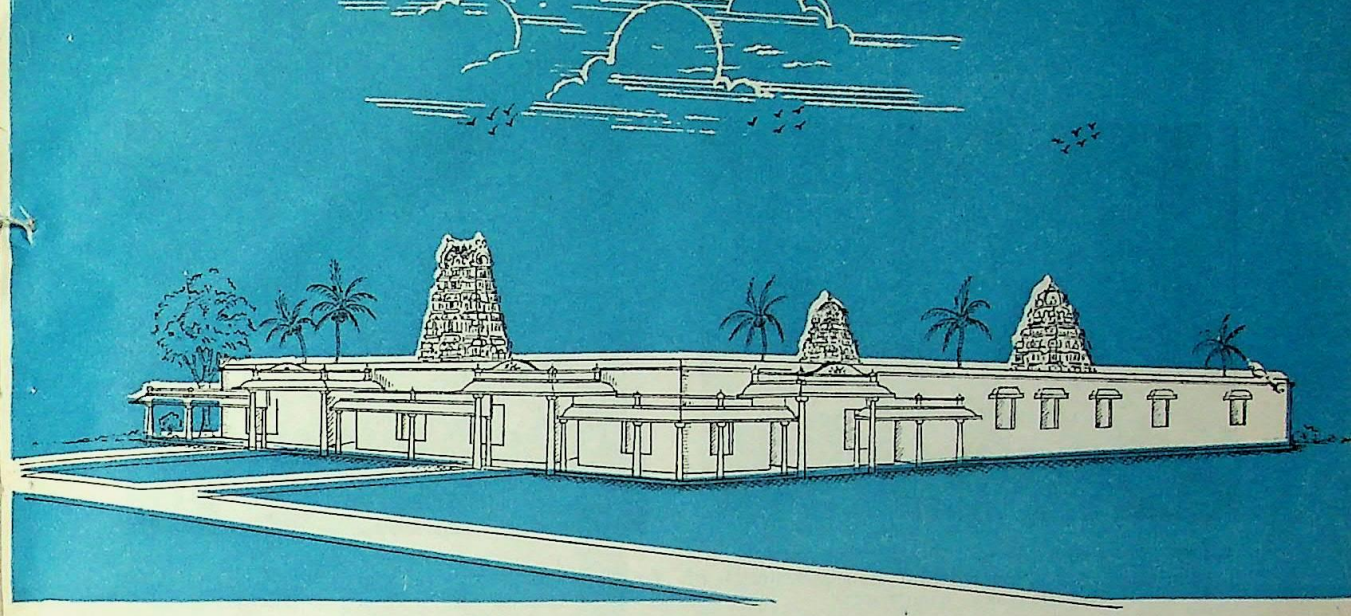
Five Verses on Inner Felicity

By Sri Viswanathan

[In our issue of April '69, p. 101, we published an article by Sri Viswanathan on *Two Great Men Meet Bhagavan.* We regret there was a printing error in it. The verses written by Sri Narayana Guru, after he met Sri Bhagavan, as stated in that article are not *Nivriti Panchakam* but *NIRVRITI PANCHAKAM* (Five Verses on Inner Felicity).

Sri Viswanathan has kindly sent the following English translation of the above *NIRVRITI PANCHAKAM*, originally written in Sanskrit by Sri Narayana Guru on seeing the exalted *NORMAL STATE* (Sahaja Samadhi) of Sri Bhagavan during his stay at Skandashram. The vivid description of Sri Bhagavan's Transcendental Supreme State by this great saint is remarkable.]

1. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who refrains from enquiries about the name, native-land, caste or clan, calling and age of others.
2. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who does not ask anyone to come, go, not to go, to enter within or where one is going.
3. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who does not enquire anybody where he is going, arriving from where and who he is.
4. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who has no notion of differentiation as I, you, he, that within or without, existence or non-existence.
5. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who remains the same with the known and unknown and free from distinctions as oneself and others and the assertion even of non-difference.



Ashram Bulletin

SRI RAMANA AUDITORIUM (Meditation Hall)

Construction in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine

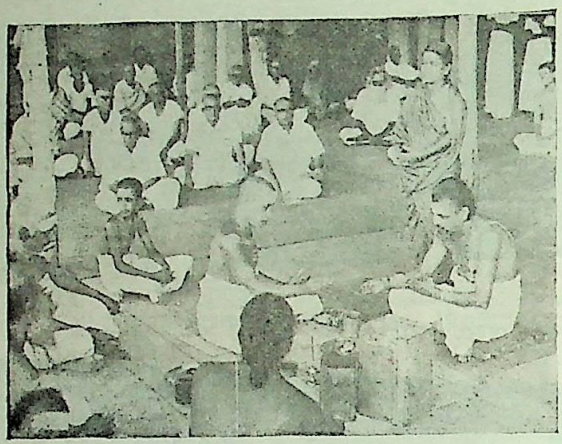
YET another Red Letter Day in Sri Ramanasramam was on 1-9-1969, when the construction work of the Meditation Hall contemplated as far back as in 1950, along with the Samadhi Shrine, was commenced after preliminary rites and poojas, officiated by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, amidst a large gathering of devotees, inland and overseas.



The Meditation Hall, to be hereafter called 'Sri Ramana Auditorium' would become the Prayer or Congregation Hall, in front of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine. It would be of size 80 feet East-West and 40 feet North-South, confined between the present office building on the north and Sri Mathrubhutheswara Shrine on the south, and connecting the southern wall of the existing Old Meditation Hall on the west. No intermediary pillars have been proposed, and the Hall is to be a simple one with a flat and high roof conforming with the existing structures. A nice frontage with three big doors and a verandah, in line and suiting the existing frontage of Sri Mathrubhutheswara Shrine, has been proposed. The drawing reproduced above would give an idea of the front elevation, height etc.

Sri K. Subbarayan, an eminent architect and qualified structural engineer of Bangalore, an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Bhagavan, responded to our request and has given us the necessary drawings and calculations etc. for the construction. He is associated with several philanthropic institutions, and has to his credit the design and execution of the imposing Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Building at Bangalore. We are also indebted to him for agreeing to give his valuable advice and guidance in the construction and completion of the work.

The project has been estimated to cost a lakh of rupees, involving heavy reinforced concrete work, requiring skill and proper equipment. It, therefore, became necessary to get a suitable agency with resources and experience to under-



Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, officiates the preliminary rituals for starting the construction of SRI RAMANA AUDITORIUM.



Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy and Sri K. K. Nambiar initiate the actual construction.

take the construction. Another devotee of Sri Bhagavan and of the Ashram, Sri C. G. Chinnappa Naidu, a leading Engineering Contractor of Bangalore, who has already rendered us much help by way of service and donations, was approached and he has agreed to take up the work, against heavy odds and handicaps, and with his sphere of activity at Bangalore.

The work is programmed to be completed by the end of March 1970, well before the Aradhana.

The amount available for the project is only Rs. 40,000. Reposing full faith in Sri Bhagavan, whose Grace we always have, and with full confidence that all devotees and philanthropists would come forward to donate generously, to help the completion of the noble task, the work has been launched. Donations to this cause are exempt from Gift Tax and Income Tax. Remittances may be made to the PRESIDENT, SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES (AUDITORIUM), SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI, SOUTH INDIA.

In this connection, we propose to bring out a Souvenir—*RAMANA JYOTHI*, containing the unpublished photos of Sri Maharshi and specially contributed articles by eminent men and devotees of Sri Bhagavan. A Committee has been formed to edit and bring out the Souvenir in a befitting manner with the following as members: Sri D. S. Sastri, *Retd. Chief Agent*, Central Bank of India, Madras Group; Sri K. K. Nambiar, Chief Engineer, *Cement Service Bureau*, Madras; Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy, *Medical Practitioner*, Madras; Sri Framji Dorabji, Partner, *Wellington Talkies*, Madras; Prof. K. Swaminathan, Chief Editor, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi; Sri Popatlal B. Kotak, Managing Director, *Messrs. Kotak & Co.*, Bombay; Sri J. Srinivasan, *Chartered Accountant*, Bangalore; and Sri V. Ganesan, the Managing Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam.

* * *

VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SRI G. S. PATHAK, VISITS THE ASHRAM

On Sept. 21, 1969, Sri G. S. Pathak, Vice President of India, with his family, visited the Ashram. The Vice President, on arrival at the Ashram entrance, was received by the President, Board of Trustees, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. All the Ashramites welcomed the party. The following were introduced to the Vice President—Sri K. Padmanabhan, member, Board of Trustees, Mr. & Mrs. Osborne, Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, ex-member of the Board, Sri T. P. Ramachandra Aiyer, one of the early devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Prof. R. K. Viswanathan and Sri P. D. Mannar Chettiar. The Vice President was then taken round the Ashram — the Nirvana Room, the New Meditation Hall, Sri Mathrubhutheswara Shrine and Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine. At the Old Meditation Hall, wherein Sri Bhagavan spent more than 25 years amidst the devotees, the Vice President and party sat down in meditation for some time in silence in front of Sri Bhagavan's couch. They all moved again to the New Meditation Hall where the Prasad of Sri Bhagavan was offered to Mr. & Mrs. Pathak, in the traditional way, with Vedic chantings. A set of books and photos of Sri Maharshi was presented to the Vice President.

Since Sri G. S. Pathak evinced keen interest to see Sri Bhagavan's handwriting, the original handwritings of Sri Bhagavan, in several languages, were shown to him.



The Vice President was pleased to say that he had fulfilled a long cherished wish by visiting the Ashram and that he was blessed to have had the Darshan and Prasad of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Pathak's daughter, a devotee of Sri Ma Anandamayee and Sri Bhagavan, stayed on. She then visited Skandashram, up the Hill Arunachala, before leaving.

PILGRIMS AND VISITORS

Sri Gurdial Mallick, mystic and poet, who was Professor of English for over twenty years at Shanti-Niketan, and an intimate associate of Poet Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, came to the Ashram on July 6 and stayed for a day. He has had remarkable experiences in life and in an article entitled "How Bhagavan came to me" in our January 1966 issue he has set out some, having reference to Sri Bhagavan whom he had not seen. A great adherent and faithful believer in the dynamism of Silence as the hall-mark of

TOP LEFT: *Sri G. S. Pathak, Vice President of India, is being received at the Ashram by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President.*

BOTTOM: *Sri Bhagavan's Prasad and books and photos of Sri Maharshi are being presented to the Vice President. Mrs. Pathak and family are also seen.*



spiritual progress and perfection, he had a very happy time meditating at Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine. He met Sri Muruganar and Sri T.P.R. and had some pleasant moments with them. Accompanying him were his Madras hosts Mr. and Mrs. Thaddani.

* * * *

Sri Krishna Bhagavathar of Bangalore, old devotee of Sri Bhagavan and well-known exponent of *harikatha-kalakshepam* was at the Ashram on July 10. After the evening poojas and Parayanam at Sri Bhagavan's shrine, he gave a delightful discourse on the story of Prahlada, expounding the significance of 'bhakthi marga' (devotional approach) and importance of "Nama-Japa," explaining them in the light of Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings. After a happy time spent at the Ashram, he left the next afternoon.

* * * *

Sri K. L. Shrimali, Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University came to the Ashram on July 11. To him "Sri Ramanasramam" has been a place of pilgrimage, and this was the second occasion he had the privilege of visiting Sri Bhagavan's Shrine and paying his respects. After spending some time and going round the premises, he recorded in the visitors book "that this abode of peace hallowed by the memory of one of our greatest Saints, Sri Ramana Maharshi, will continue to remain a source of inspiration to millions of people who seek Truth and Happiness." Before leaving, he was presented with Sri Bhagavan's photo and books.

* * * *

Mr. B. D. Jatti, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry stepped into the Ashram on July 12 for a very brief visit. He had been here before. After worship at the Shrines and going round the Ashram he left.

* * * *

On July 13 the *Ambassador of the Netherlands* at *New Delhi* and his wife paid a visit to the Ashram escorted by the District officials. They were received on arrival by Sri T. N. Venkatraman, President of the Board of Trustees. The visitors were taken round to the places of sanctity and interest in the Ashram by Sri T.P.R. who explained everything in detail to them. They spent some time in the room where Bhagavan attained Brahma-Nirvana, and were briefly told of Sri Bhagavan's life, his early days and abodes on the Hill. They saw the Mother's Shrine and the New Hall appurtenant to it where Sri Bhagavan stayed for some months during the last days. The constructions out of granite stones and workmanship interested them. Then going to Sri Bhagavan's Shrine they stood before it in silence for a few minutes. The installations over the Samadhi, the Mantapam and its imposing pillars out of polished granite, drew their attention very much. At the Old Meditation Hall, where Sri Bhagavan spent more than 25 years, a few minutes were spent in silence before the couch where Sri Bhagavan used to sit. Passing through the Dining Hall they moved to the office room. They sat for some time and were presented with a Photo of Sri Bhagavan and a book on His life and teachings.

Expressing their thanks to the President for the courtesies shown and to Sri T. P. R. for his helpful guidance, the Ambassador signed the Visitor's Book saying that he was "very interested by all that was shown to him and much touched by the peaceful atmosphere of the place."

* * * *

Mr. P. B. Kotak and his wife *Mrs. Chandrabagh Kotak* of Bombay who have had the pleasure of being with Sri Bhagavan about 25 years ago, arrived at the Ashram on July 19 and stayed for two days. They were extremely happy now to have had this opportunity of visiting Sri Bhagavan's Shrine and abode again and taking part in the Ashram routine. They performed Sri Chakra Puja at night. On the following day they arranged for worship at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan and for Biksha. After a happy time spent, they left on the following day.

* * *

Sri Mota, a widely known spiritual head from Gujarat, visited our Ashram on July 21 with some of his followers. He paid his respects at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine and at the Mother's Shrine and looked at other places. Sri Mota has been helping and guiding his followers in the diverse paths of approach to spiritual perfection at the various centres established by him, one such being in South India at Kumbakonam. He is extremely popular in Gujarat and reputed to devote all offerings for philanthropic ends. He has seen Sri Bhagavan and had His Dharsan once before, in the later half of the forties. He spent some time with his associate and follower Mr. H. G. Nilkanth.

* * *

Two youngsters from England, *Christopher* and *Phillip Pegler*, who spent a few days at the Ashram (Christopher had already been here) were so much drawn by Sri Bhagavan's teachings and by the spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram that they avowed themselves to be again at the Ashram very soon. They write:

The ways of the Master are indeed strange and wonderful. Only months after leaving school and

feeling ourselves rather lost at the crossroads of our lives, His powerful voice called us. That beautiful book by Mouni Sadhu: *In Days of Great Peace*, somehow fell into our hands and made a deep impression on us. Thus we entered on the Path.

Three years later that path led us unerringly to the Ashram. Such a place, radiating peace and purity, we hardly believed existed. But we now know after spending our all too short annual holiday at the foot of Arunachala that Bhagavan still *LIVES*. His Grace manifested itself through his devotees, who were so kind and loving, and gave us the benefit of their spiritual experience.

Our stay at the Ashram has surely strengthened our faith and deepened our devotion to the Master. We pray we may experience this love, more and more in the world, so that His words infuse our lives more and more.

We now realise with certainty the necessity for absolute surrender to His Will. By His will may we return to the Ashram before long.

Please accept our love and best wishes for all at the Ashram; we are indebted for the wise guidance we received.

CHRISTOPHER AND PHILLIP PEGLER.
England.

ASHRAM DISPENSARY

The Ashram Free Dispensary, under the able supervision and conduct of Dr. K. R. Srinivasan, the Honorary Medical Officer (referred to in the *Ashram Bulletin* of April 1969, p. 124) is being conducted well and to the entire satisfaction of the visiting patients and the devotees in and around the Ashram. The number of patients is ever on the increase.



Dr. Srinivasan

We appeal to Medical firms to kindly help this noble cause by sending free medicines and samples whenever possible. The Ashram management and Dr. Srinivasan will be deeply indebted to such firms who would volunteer their help and assistance to this free dispensary.

Mr. & Mrs. OSBORNE

After a year's absence abroad, Mr. & Mrs. Osborne have returned back to Sri Ramanas-



Mr. & Mrs. Osborne, at their home in Ramana Nagar, after their return from England.

ramam, looking very much better. They had been to Europe for a change of climate and rest following a period of Mr. Osborne's illness and heavy work.

They almost lived in retirement, in England and in Spain and are sorry not to have been able to meet all friends interested in Sri Bhagavan's teachings and devoted to Him. They feel confirmed in their impression about the unrest and spiritual hunger prevalent, particularly among young people in the world of disintegrating values, without anchorage at certainty, and their seeking for guidance which they need. If and when Mr. Osborne repeats his visit abroad, he hopes to be of all help he can in the service of Sri Bhagavan.

We are all very glad that they are back at the abode of Sri Bhagavan.

SAT SANGH AT RAMANA MANDIRAM, MADURAI

On Thursday, Sept. 18, a Sat Sangh was held at *Sri Ramana Mandiram*, Madurai (11, Chokkappa Naicken Street) — the Holy place where

struction of the Sri Mathrubhuteswara Shrine in the Ashram premises and performing the Kumbhabhishekam thereof in 1949. Thereafter and during all the time that a serious illness beset Sri Bhagavan's body resulting in His Brahma Nirvana in April 1950, he stood close to Him and the Ashramites, sharing with one and all, the anxieties, stress and strain of those days.

After Sri Bhagavan's Nirvana Sri O.P.R. has been devoting his life and work in the cause of religious and welfare activities in Vadalur, the pilgrim centre hallowed by the mystic saint Sri Ramalinga Swamigal.

With Sri Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings that ever stays with His devotees, we convey our regards and best wishes to him.

NOTICE

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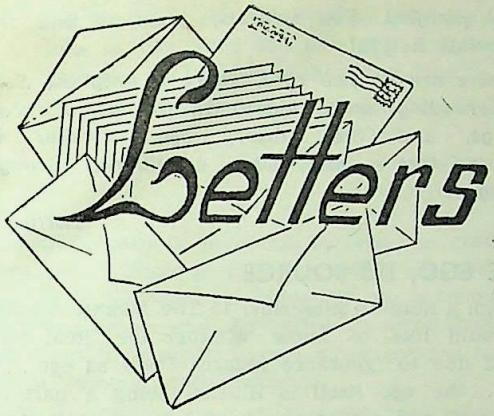
Copies of January 1970 will be sent only on renewal of subscription.

Receipts will be sent along with the issue of January, 1970 and *not* separately.

In case of *non-renewal*, kindly oblige by informing us to that effect.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH,
Sri Ramanasramam,
1st October, 1969.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.



. . . . . to the EDITOR

THE EDITORIAL

The last two paragraphs of the Editorial article are excellent. It is true to say that " the discipline of disinterested activity seldom suffices to dissolve the ego-sense." To starve it to death the powerful weapon of Inquiry must be employed. This we do when we practise *Vichara* regularly. While engrossed in our daily routine we constantly ask ourselves the question, " who does it ? " When we are overwhelmed with success or grief the precept suggested in the last two paragraphs abates the wild behaviour of the mind and gives us peace. Experience has taught me the value of this precept. I hope readers of *The Mountain Path* who have also asked themselves the question " who is happy ? " or " who is worried ? " during occasions of success or sorrow will share my opinion.

I trust those who have not put these precepts into practice will not lay aside *The Mountain Path* after reading your article, but also profit by actual practice of what is suggested. It does pay to follow the suggestions. Each issue does contain such valuable suggestions.

P. V. Srinivasan,
Principal, Govt. Arts College,
Villupuram.

TWO EGOS ?

Complete Self-Enquiry or self-surrender are most difficult tasks. Both need egolessness on the part of the seeker. The doctrine of Grace of God or Guru is a riddle. It is an argument in a circle. Effective Vichara and mere intellectual understanding or learning are not the same. Sri Ramana Maharshi discourages mere reading of erudite books. Where then is the justification for *The Mountain Path's* having come into being ? Sadhakas like my humble self with weak or impure minds are incapable of intense concentration necessary in practice of Self-Enquiry, meditation, absolute surrender and the like. To such a one Grace is hoping against hope. Karmic laws are infallible ! For such a sadhaka it becomes almost impossible to fight against evil Destiny ! I shall not prolong this chain of despondent thoughts any further.

I badly need inspiration from Saints and Sages past and present. I have strong hopes of Grace from my Master who left this world long ago. I fail however to feel his disembodied presence.

I remember having read in the October issue of *The Mountain Path* that there is a possibility of your learned editorials being printed collectively in book form, possibly along with your other important articles. I am one of those who are eagerly waiting for such a publication.

Lastly, may I ask you if you recognise two egos, one absolute, admirable and desirable and the other limited and undesirable ? To make my query clear, I invite your attention to the fact that the most Absolute Brahman is naturally inactive. It does not destroy ignorance, since absolutely thinking there is nothing else like ignorance. But the Self of saints and sages does destroy the ignorance of their devotees by their mere presence or even by writing books large or small, like Sri Ramana Maharshi's literature. Thus one has to recognise something like pure Ego in saints and sages. In addition, realised sages like Vyasa, Valmiki, Shankaracharya and Sri Ramana Maharshi expect that their books ought to be read repeatedly by their devotees. The question therefore arises as to how they discourage book learning, and on the other hand how they inspire editors like your good self to publish *The Mountain Path*, if the reading of books is of no use ! I hope you will consider this

letter sympathetically and do the needful. Please excuse its unusual length.

S. K. PHADKE,
Bombay.

Self-Enquiry or self-surrender are no doubt difficult to practise but with patience and perseverance there is progress gradually and here it is where Grace comes in. The real Guru is not someone outside you. He is your very Self and what could be nearer? In the measure of one's sincerity and one-pointedness Grace or God or the Self respond from the core of your being. They are one and the same. The vichara is not mere intellectual understanding or learning; it is an inner quest reaching to the source of one's being. The reply does not come in so many words. When there is a reply it is Certainty.

It is quite in order to read books on spiritual matters for clarification of one's doubts or more spiritual knowledge. Once one knows what is to be done or what way to follow there is no need to read unnecessarily.

A Master is not limited to the body. He takes a human form in order to lead us back to the living inner Guru. Often His Grace and help are felt even more after He leaves the body, as has happened with Christ, Buddha, Ramana Maharshi and many more. If you persevere in all sincerity you are sure to feel His presence sooner or later.

In the 18th chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita *there is the assurance:*

"Seek Me as thy sole Refuge; I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve."

And again:

"Fix thy thought on Me . . . thou shalt reach Myself: this is My promise for thou art dear to Me."

What more can one wish in the way of assurance?

There is no need to be despondent or fight against destiny. Nothing happens by accident. What you deem a misfortune may be a sign of Grace. One can see it better in perspective. In any case there is no fate except the one you yourself have prepared, so from any point we can start working for a better fate on the plane of karma. The more detached we become the less we are affected by fate.

The question of publishing the editorials of The Mountain Path *in book form will be considered later.* The Mountain Path *is of help to many seekers and it is spreading Ramana Maharshi's teaching; that's why its publication is more than justified. You yourself seem to find the editorials helpful.*

There are no two egos. There is only the Self, all-pervading and abiding in the heart of all beings, and the illusory ego vanishes in the end like a ghost when enlightened through sadhana.

EDITOR.

THE EGO, ITS SOURCE

I am a humble subscriber to *The Mountain Path*. I would like to know whether the Real Self Itself due to ignorance regards Itself as ego . . . or . . . the ego itself is illusion being a part of non-self and its source being the Real Self is always free and unthinkable. Please excuse me for the trouble.

RAMUBHAI N. DESAI,
Jain Society, Navsari.

The ego is an illusion. Everything is Brahman — Oneness. The individual self or ego regards itself as separate through ignorance of its true state. With the help of the vichara "Who am I?" or other sadhana one may reach the source of one's being and realise that there never was an ego. It would be like waking from a dream, a dream of separateness.

EDITOR.

ON TOTAL SURRENDER

I shall be much indebted to you if you will enlighten me on the following through your invaluable journal — *The Mountain Path*:

1. What are thoughts in relation to the Self-Enquiry method of Bhagavan? Do thoughts include all the activities of the five senses?
2. I can suspend thoughts for a few minutes, but I am aware of the activities of the outer world. When this exercise is prolonged time passes unawares, and I am not sure whether at the time I was asleep or conscious. Do you call this activity of mine 'the suspension of thoughts while retaining consciousness'?
3. Can one practise Bhakti-marga along with Self-Enquiry?
4. Bhagavan said that complete surrender is to leave everything to Him. He knows what is best for the devotee, and the devotee should not want Him to do as he (the devotee) wants. In short — a devotee's burden is His, insofar as I understand the meaning of complete surrender. But a doubt arises in me. Should I not wish for myself the basic needs in life, viz. the wish for simple food

and clothing and to pour out my unalloyed love at His lotus feet — is this simple wish of mine an indirect demand on Him?

5. Is complete surrender comparable to Self-Enquiry?

D. SIVAPRAGASAM,
Vavuniya, Ceylon.

Self-Enquiry is practised in order to eradicate thoughts. When a thought arises we ask "To whom?" Thoughts embrace all the activities of the five senses and the entire universe. There is no limit to thoughts except when we try to still them through Self-Enquiry.

If one is not sure whether one was asleep or conscious, then it is not a state worth aiming at. A glimpse of the real state leaves no doubt whatsoever. It is Certainty.

One can practise Bhakti-marga along with Self-Enquiry. Whatever helps is good. There is no real Wisdom without love and no true Love without wisdom.

If surrender is complete there is no need to wish even for the basic needs in life. Bhagavan knows what is needed. It is said in the Bhagavad-Gita:

> *"I undertake to protect and secure the welfare of those who without otherness meditate on Me." (that is, those who completely surrender to Me.)*

It has been the experience of devotees that they need not worry at all even about their basic needs in cases of sincere surrender. Sometimes it is almost thrust on them.

Complete surrender is certainly compatible with Self-Enquiry. If it is complete there will be no need for anything else.

EDITOR.

A QUESTIONNAIRE!

My daughter's son, Rajesh Mehra, sixteen years of age, living with his parents in Goffney, South Carolina, U.S.A., has requested me to furnish answers to such questions as the following:

1. With what object and how did our universe come into being?
2. How is Hinduism any better than Christianity or any other religion?
3. Is it necessary to have a religion?
4. Is not the fact that one believes in God enough?

S. K. KAPUR,
Agra.

1. This is a question which has been asked by many people young and old. There is no concise reply to it. One may say it is a sort of "perpetuum mobile" always going on "world without end". For the purpose of sadhana or striving to realise our true state one may just as well consider the whole vexed question as no more than a dream not much different from dreams while asleep except that one is a long sustained dream while the other is fragmentary. We dream not only the world but ourselves also and we act on that plane within its limits. When we dream that we are falling over a precipice or being attacked by a tiger the fear we feel is real enough to cause physiological manifestations. We awaken still trembling to realise its unreality never entertaining a doubt while it lasted. Why not try to find out whether there is not a similar awakening from the dream of worldly existence? Sri Ramana Maharshi shows the way to dispel all illusion and find out "Who am I?" First of all let's solve this riddle or quest and this will solve all other doubts and riddles.

2. Not everybody considers his religion better than another. Factionalists presume that their religion is best. The syncretist on the other hand believes that there ought to be one religion for the whole world. One religion is not better than another but may be better suited to a particular race or group of people. Pluralists believe that a single world religion is not possible because of deep-rooted differences though it is the One God who manifested Himself in many ways and places hence the various religions, which need not lead to conflict but should co-exist amicably emphasising unity in variety and tolerance. Truth, the Self or call it God, is One; the one Reality underlying all different modalities. Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita: *"Under whatever name you pray or make an offering it all comes to Me only."*

3. Considering the frailty of human nature it is advisable not to discard the support which a religion can give and also help to avoid pitfalls and give a sense of peace in a world so full of conflicts and uncertainties.

4. If one believes in God why not follow the injunctions of scriptures as a token of belief and love. Some engage in selfless sedvice which is conducive to inner peace while with others it amounts only to lip-service. If one follows a spiritual path there may come a time when all this becomes unnecessary but then it will follow of its own accord. The question will not arise.

EDITOR.

NOTICE

The annual membership subscription for Sri Ramanasramam stands enhanced to Rs. 10/- per annum from 1-1-1970. The subscription for Life Membership, however, remains at Rs. 100/-, as before.

Memberships may be renewed with timely remittances, intimating any change in address. It will not be possible to issue reminders more than once.

Enrolment of Life Members on a large scale is earnestly requested.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President,
Board of Trustees.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

VOLUME VI – 1969

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PUBLISHER :

T. N. VENKATARAMAN

President, Board of Trustees

SRI RAMANASRAMAM

TIRUVANNAMALAI (S. India)

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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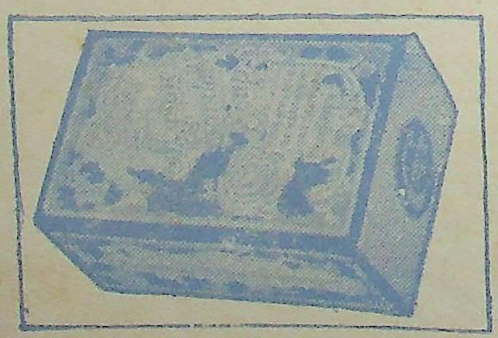
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